

NATIONAL CENTRE  
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

राष्ट्रीय संगीत नाट्य केन्द्र

Quarterly Journal

Volume V

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Cover Picture:

Still from **BALA**, the NCPA—Tamil Nadu Government film directed by Satyajit Ray.

The contributors to this number include:

T. Balasaraswati, great exponent of Bharata Natyam.

Richard Schechner, Director, The Performance Group (New York).

Satyajit Ray, renowned film maker.

B. K. Karanjia, Editor, *Filmfare*, and until recently Chairman, Film Finance Corporation.

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From BALA

## Bharata Natyam

T. Balasaraswati

I am sincerely grateful to the Tamil Isai Sangam for giving me the honour of presiding over the Conference this year.\* I consider it a great privilege to have this honour conferred on me in the year of the 600th anniversary of *Arunagirinathar*<sup>1</sup> who sang the praise of *Arumugan*, the darling deity of Tamil Nadu.

There is a special relationship between Tamil Music and Bharata Natyam. The Tamil lyrics of Muthuthandavar, Ganam Krishna Iyer and Subbarama Iyer lend themselves wonderfully well for dancing with intense participation. It is the distinguishing feature of Tamil music that compositions, coming in an unbroken line from the Vaishnava and Shaiva Saints through Gopalakrishna Bharathi down to the composers of our own time, are replete with moods and feelings suitable for *abhinaya*.

As far as I know, Bharata Natyam is *bhakti*; Tamil is also nothing but *bhakti*. I believe, therefore, that Tamil and *bhakti* are part of the same tradition.

\*Presidential Address of Dr. T. Balasaraswati at the 33rd Annual Conference of the Tamil Isai Sangam, Madras, 21st December 1975.

In *Silappadikaram*<sup>2</sup>, eleven dances<sup>3</sup> are referred to which were danced by divinities like Shiva, Tirumal (Vishnu), Murugan, Kama, Kali, Tirumagal (Lakshmi) and Indrani. They depict the destruction of various demons and symbolise the triumph of good over evil. This is evidence enough that the dance was a divine art whose theme was the destruction of evil and the purification of the spirit.

In these early dance forms, valour and wrath are the predominant emotions. Yet, *shringara* which was later to become the ruling mood of *abhinaya* was pre-eminent in the Tamil dance tradition right from the beginning. In the two important dance forms, the Court dance and the Common dance, which relate respectively to the inner and the outer life of man, *shringara* belongs to the Court and to the inner life. This explains the eminence of *shringara* as a mood. In dances such as the Group Dance of the Cowherd Girls, this same *shringara* becomes the love of God. This *bhakti* is beautifully expressed in the following verses of *Silappadikaram*:

*A girl to her companion:*

The Magical One,  
Who shook the young tree like a stick,  
And brought the fruits down —  
Should he come amidst our cattle,  
Shall we not hear again,  
The music of the sweet Konrai flute  
On His lips!

*and*

Oh, the look on her face!  
Her garment and bangles slipped away  
With her hands, she covered herself.  
Seeing her,  
Who hid herself with her hands,  
His shame and pity became wild passion.  
Oh, the look on His face!

It is this stream of *shringara* that swells into the mighty river of the lover-beloved songs of the Vaishnava and Shaiva Saints, the *ashtapadi*-s of Jayadeva and the compositions of Kshetragna. In Bharata Natyam, too, when it comes to *abhinaya*, *shringara* has been the dominant mood.

I emphasise all this because of some who seek to "purify" Bharata Natyam by replacing the traditional lyrics which express *shringara* with devotional songs. I respectfully submit to such protagonists that there is nothing in Bharata Natyam which can be purified afresh; it is divine as it is and innately so. The *shringara* we experience in Bharata Natyam is never carnal; never, never. For those who have yielded themselves to its discipline with total dedication, dance like music is the practice of the Presence; it cannot be merely the body's rapture.

Bharata Natyam is an art which consecrates the body which is considered to be in itself of no value. The *yogi* by controlling his breath and by modifying his body acquires the halo of sanctity. Even so, the dancer, who dissolves her identity in rhythm and music, makes her body an instrument, at least for the duration of the dance, for the experience and expression of the spirit.

I believe that the traditional order of the Bharata Natyam recital viz., *alarippu*, *jatiswaram*, *shabdham*, *varnam*, *padam*-s, *tillana* and the *shloka* is the correct sequence in the practice of this art, which is an artistic *yoga*, for revealing the spiritual through the corporeal.

The greatness of this traditional concert-pattern will be apparent even from a purely aesthetic point of view. In the beginning, *alarippu*, which is based on rhythm alone, brings out the special charm of pure dance. The movements of *alarippu* relax the dancer's body and thereby her mind, loosen and coordinate her limbs and prepare her for the dance. Rhythm has a rare capacity to concentrate. *Alarippu* is most valuable in freeing the dancer from distraction and making her single-minded.

The joy of pure rhythm in *alarippu* is followed by *jatiswaram* where there is the added joy of melody. Melody, without word or syllable, has a special power to unite us with our being. In *jatiswaram*, melody and movement come together. Then comes the *shabdham*. It is here that compositions, with words and meanings, which enable the expression of the myriad moods of Bharata Natyam are introduced.

The Bharata Natyam recital is structured like a Great Temple: we enter through the *gopuram* (outer hall) of *alarippu*, cross the *ardhamandapam* (half-way hall) of *jatiswaram*, then the *mandapa* (great hall) of *shabdham*, and enter the holy precinct of the deity in the *varnam*. This is the place, the space, which gives the dancer expansive scope to revel in the rhythm, moods and music of the dance. The *varnam* is the continuum which gives ever-expanding room to the dancer to delight in her self-fulfilment, by providing the fullest scope to her own creativity as well as to the tradition of the art.

The *padam*-s now follow. In dancing to the *padam*-s, one experiences the containment, cool and quiet, of entering the sanctum from its external precinct. The expanse and brilliance of the outer corridors disappear in the dark inner sanctum; and the rhythmic virtuositities of the *varnam* yield to the soul-stirring music and *abhinaya* of the *padam*. Dancing to the *padam* is akin to the juncture when the cascading lights of worship are withdrawn and the drum beats die down to the simple and solemn chanting of sacred verses in the closeness of God. Then, the *tillana* breaks into movement like the final burning of camphor accompanied by a measure of din and bustle. In conclusion, the devotee takes to his heart the god he has so far glorified outside; and the dancer completes the traditional order by dancing to a simple devotional verse.

At first, mere metre; then, melody and metre; continuing with music, meaning and metre; its expansion in the centrepiece of the *varnam*; thereafter, music and meaning without metre; in variation of this, melody and metre; in contrast to the pure rhythmical beginning, a non-metrical song at the end. We see a most wonderful completeness and symmetry in this art. Surely the traditional votaries of our music and dance would not wish us to take any liberties with this sequence.

The aesthetics and the artistry of Bharata Natyam alike make us realise that *shringara* has pride of place here. In a sense, Bharata Natyam is a combination of the *yoga* and *mantra shastra*-s. The *mudra*-s of the *mantra shastra* are the same as the hand gestures of Bharata Natyam. When dancing to the beat of the rhythm, as in a *yoga* exercise, the dancer's body is rid of its human weaknesses and is purified into a conduit of the spiritual and the beautiful. However, the experience of the art can be total only if a variety of moods and feelings are portrayed; and, variety is the soul of art. But these feelings should be universalised into aspects of divinity and not remain the limited experience of an insignificant human being. The mood of a song may tend to get portrayed as the subjective feeling of one individual; but true art lies in universalising this experience. To train the dancer in this art, melody and metre join together in *jatiswaram*. The dancer takes leave of her subjective consciousness in the *alarippu* and identifies herself with the universal consciousness in the *jatiswaram*. Hereafter, she is ready to explore and express the infinitely varied nuances of the entire gamut of emotions and feelings not in terms of her subjective self but in terms which bring out their universal essence.

*Shringara* stands supreme in this range of emotions. No other emotion is capable of better reflecting the mystic union of the human with the divine. I say this with deep personal experience of dancing to many great devotional songs which have had no element of *shringara* in them. Devotional songs are, of course, necessary. However, *shringara* is the cardinal emotion which gives the fullest scope for artistic improvisation, branching off continually, as it does, into the portrayal of innumerable moods full of newness and nuance.

If we approach Bharata Natyam with humility, learn it with dedication, and practise it with devotion to God, *shringara* which brings out the great beauties of this dance can be portrayed with all the purity of the spirit. The flesh, which is considered to be an enemy of the spirit, having been made a vehicle of the divine in the discipline of the dance, *shringara*, which is considered to be the greatest obstacle to spiritual realisation, has itself, we shall realise, become an instrument for uniting the dancer with Divinity.

(Since the dancer has universalised her experience, all that she goes through is also felt and experienced by the spectator.)

Refined in the crucible of *alarippu* and *jatiswaram*, the dancer portrays the emotions of the musical text in the *shabdam* in their pristine purity. In the *shabdam*, emotions are withheld at the beginning; thereafter, when the



From BALA

dancer has clarified herself, they are released in a measured and disciplined manner. It is after mastering this discipline that she dances the *varnam* which is a living river that holds together movement and interpretation.

The composer of a *shabdam* or a *varnam* might have dedicated it to a prince or a nobleman. But as far as the dancer is concerned, the hero can only be the King of kings, the Lord of the wide world. It is impossible for her to dedicate her art, which has sanctified her body and has made her heart sacred, to a mere mortal. She can experience and communicate the sacred in what appears to be secular. After all, our composers have been steeped in the tradition of *bhakti*. While singing the praise of secular heroes, they begin to dwell on his devotion to Brihadishwara of Thanjavur or to Tyagesha of Tiruvarur or to Padmanabha of Tiruvananthapuram. The dancer taking the cue enters the realm of *bhakti*, enjoys the play and pranks of the deity concerned and displays them in her *abhinaya*. The divine, so far mixed with the secular, now becomes explicit in the dance and impresses itself deep in the heart. Various rhythmic movements are inter-twined with her *abhinaya*; this saves her from degenerating into the human, and keeps her fresh and pure in the *yoga* of the dance.

It is after passing through this ordeal of fire that the dancer fully qualifies herself to do *abhinaya* for the *padam*-s. If she has dedicated herself to the art, there will be no carnal distortions in her interpretations of the *padam*. Steeped in art and beauty, which are pure spiritual states, she expresses the joy which is at the basis of different moods and emotions. Such



a dancer will feel no need to "purify" any item in the traditional order of Bharata Natyam.

Indeed, the effort to purify Bharata Natyam through the introduction of novel ideas is like putting a gloss on burnished gold or painting the lotus.

The inadequacies that are felt in this art arise from the inadequacies of the dancer herself. If Bharata Natyam is studied with devotion, dedication, patience and thoroughness, its completeness in its traditional form will be crystal clear. The traditional sequence and structure of the recital secures and safeguards this completeness. There is, therefore, no need to purify perfection by amending, adding or subtracting any of the elements in the traditional order of the recital.

The traditional recital is a rich combination of diverse aesthetic and psychological elements which produces complete enjoyment. To alter this arrangement because it is considered "boring" is to destroy the integrity of aesthetic enjoyment.

Let those who create novel dance forms present them as separate performances; they need not make a hash of the Bharata Natyam recital by interpolations of novelties. Of Madhavi's dancing master, the *Silappadikaram* says that "he knew when only one hand had to be used (*pindi*) and when both the hands had to be used (*pinaiyal*). He also knew when the hands had to be used for exhibiting action (*tolirka*) and for graceful effect (*elirka*). Knowing as he did the conventions of dancing, he did not mix up the single-handed demonstration (*kutai*) with the double-handed (*varam*) and vice versa, as also pure gesture with gesticulatory movement and vice versa. In the movements of the feet also he did not mix up the *kuravai* with the *vari*. He was such an expert".

The dancer can integrate herself with her discipline if she goes through the traditional sequence in one continuous flow without too much of an interval between one item and another; and the completeness of the recital in its entirety will assert itself. My personal opinion is that this concerted effect of the experience of dancing, which needs mental concentration, is spoilt by frequent changes of costume.

*Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* list dance, music and the personal beauty of the dancer in that order. Yet unfortunately the last and least of them has come to the forefront at the present time. When so much importance is attached to the looks of the dancer, it is but natural that dancing is considered carnal and *shringara* vulgar. The truth is exactly the opposite; it is her dance and music alone that make a dancer beautiful.

Kalidasa describes Malavika standing tired and perspiring after her dance as the best of all her *abhinaya*. This is not just poetic conceit. Even when the collyrium gets smudged and the make-up is disturbed in the course of the dance, that itself is a tribute to the dancer's dedication.

When the continuity of the dance is interrupted by costume changes, announcements and explanations, the congealing of inner feeling becomes impossible and concentration is shattered.

The greatest blessing of Bharata Natyam is its ability to control the mind. Most of us are incapable of single-minded contemplation even when actions are abandoned. On the other hand, in Bharata Natyam actions are not avoided; there is much to do but it is the harmony of various actions that results in the concentration we seek. The burden of action is forgotten in the pleasant charm of the art. The feet keeping to time, hands expressing gesture, the eye following the hand with expression, the ear listening to the dance master's music, and the dancer's own singing—by harmonising these five elements the mind achieves concentration and attains clarity in the very richness of participation. The inner feeling of the dancer is the sixth sense which harnesses these five mental and mechanical elements to create the experience and enjoyment of beauty. It is the spark which gives the dancer her sense of spiritual freedom in the midst of the constraints and discipline of the dance. The *yogi* achieves serenity through concentration that comes from discipline. The dancer brings together her feet, hands, eyes, ears and singing into a fusion which transforms the serenity of the *yogi* into a torrent of beauty. The spectator, who is absorbed in intently watching this, has his mind freed of distractions and feels a great sense of clarity. In their shared involvement, the dancer and the spectator are both released from the weight of worldly life, and experience the divine joy of the art with a sense of total freedom.

To experience this rare rapture, a dancer has only to submit herself willingly to discipline. It will be difficult in the beginning to conform to the demands and discipline of rhythm and melody and to the norms and codes of the tradition. But if she humbly submits to the greatness of this art, soon enough she will find joy in that discipline; and she will realise that discipline makes her free in the joyful realm of the art.

*The greatest authorities on the dance have definitively recognised that it is the orthodoxy of traditional discipline which gives the fullest freedom to the individual creativity of the dancer.*

Young dancers who go in for novelties will find that their razzle-dazzle does not last long. On the other hand, if they hold firm to the tradition, which like the Great Banyan strikes deep roots and spreads wide branches, they will gain for themselves and those who watch them the dignity and joy of Bharata Natyam. I come out with these submissions only because of my anxiety that they should realise this. The young will recognise the greatness of this art if they study it with intense participation, calmly and without haste.

One has to begin early and learn it for many years to reach a devout understanding of the immanent greatness of this art. Then comes the recognition of one's great good fortune in being chosen to practise this art; this recognition leads the dancer to surrender herself to her art. Such sur-

render makes her 'aware of the divinity and wholeness of Bharata Natyam. And the art will continue to flourish without the aid of new techniques which aim at "purifying" it or changes in dress, ornament, make-up and the interpolation of new items which seek to make it more "complete". This is my prayer.

It is the Tamil tradition to honour a dancer by presenting her with a *talaicol*.<sup>1</sup> I look upon the Presidentship of the Conference which the Tamil Isai Sangam has conferred upon me as a *talaicol* which I have received through the grace of Nataraja who keeps the myriad worlds in movement.

<sup>1</sup>Saint-poet of Tamil Nadu, author of *Tirupugazh* or the 'Holy Praise' of Arumugan or Subrahmanya, son of Shiva.

<sup>2</sup>*Silappadikaram* — Tamil classic of the second century A.D.

<sup>3</sup>The eleven dances referred to in the *Silappadikaram* are: (i) *kodukotti* danced by Shiva on the burial ground; (ii) *pandaranga* dance which Shiva displayed before Brahma standing in His chariot; (iii) *elliyam* performed by Vishnu after disposing of the treacherous devices of Kamsa; (iv) *mallu* performed by Vishnu after the destruction of the demon Bana; (v) *tudi* (drum-dance) of Subrahmanya which was the war-dance of triumph, on destroying the demon Surapadma, on the heaving wave-platform of the ocean to the accompaniment of the rattle of his drum; (vi) *kudai* (umbrella-dance) danced by Subrahmanya lowering the umbrella before the demons who gave up their arms; (vii) *kudam* (pot-dance) danced by Vishnu after walking through the streets of Banasura's city; (viii) *pedi* danced by Kama (Cupid); (ix) *marakkal* dance of Durga; (x) *pavai* dance of Lakshmi; (xi) *kadayam* dance of Indrani at the northern gate of Bana's city.

<sup>4</sup>*Talaicol* — Staff of honour given to musicians, poets and dancers. It was the central shaft of a splendid white umbrella captured in battle from the enemy-king.

(Translated from the original Tamil into English by S. Guhan)

## The Performance Group in India

February-April 1976

Richard Schechner

### Program

Tour funded by JDR 3rd Fund, New York, who paid for overseas transportation, and contributed towards production and TPG living and travel expenses in India. Local sponsors in India paid for most of the local production costs and provided most of the living accommodation for TPG members. Local sponsors also donated in-kind work on publicity, the environments, and day-to-day running of the shows. United States Information Service paid for much of the advertising in India; also USIS paid TPG members for leading workshops in Calcutta and Bombay. TPG contributed money toward salaries while on tour and production expenses.

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The Company, in order of speaking:

STEPHEN BORST as Recruiter, Chaplain, Lieutenant  
JAMES GRIFFITHS as Sergeant, Cook, Poldi, Soldier  
JOAN MACINTOSH as Mother Courage (Anna Fierling)  
JAMES CLAYBURGH as Eilif, Man With A Patch Over His Eye, Clerk, Soldier  
SPALDING GRAY as Swiss Cheese, Soldier, Peasant  
ELIZABETH LECOMPTE as General, Yvette, Peasant  
RON VAWTER as Ordnance Officer, Townspeople  
BRUCE RAYVID as Soldier, Another Sergeant, Peasant  
LEENY SACK as Katrin

Environment designed by JAMES CLAYBURGH  
Musical director & pianist, MIRIAM CHARNEY  
Technical director, BRUCE RAYVID  
Costumes, THEODORA SKIPITARES  
Technical director in India, V. RAMAMURTHY  
Associate technical director for Bhopal and Bombay, BENU GANGULY  
Technical assistants, KAS SELF, MUNIERA CHRISTIANSEN  
General Manager & drummer, RON VAWTER  
Director, RICHARD SCHECHNER

Music by PAUL DESSAU  
Translated from the German by RALPH MANHEIM  
MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN by BERTOLT BRECHT  
(Written 1938; World Premier, Zurich, 1939)

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*Tour Outline: 6 Localities, 23 Performances, 56 Days*

Place	Dates	Sponsors
New Delhi Modern School Gymnasium	February 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21: 9 performances	Abhiyan Rajinder Nath Som Nath Sapru M. N. Kapur, Principal of Modern School
Lucknow A private motor garage	February 27, 28: 2 performances	Theatre Arts Work- shop Raj Bisaria
Calcutta Abhinav Bharati Theatre	March 9, 10, 12, 13, 14: 5 performances	Anamika Kala Sangam Shyamanand Jalan Bishwambhar Sureka Naveen Kishore
Singjole Under two trees	March 18: 1 performance	Tagore Society Barin Saha Badal Sircar
Bhopal Ravindra Bhawan	March 26, 27: 2 performances	Madhya Pradesh Kala Parishad Ashok Bajpeyi Satyan Kumar Benu Ganguly
Bombay Cathedral and John Connon School courtyard	April 3, 4, 5, 6: 4 performances	National Centre for the Performing Arts Narayana Menon K. K. Suvarna K. Kuruvila Jacob, Principal of Cathedral and John Connon School

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There is a life rhythm to any group that presumes to the status of ensemble. At intervals it re-creates itself, or ends. The Performance Group (TPG) began in 1967, re-created itself in 1970, again in 1972, and again at this moment (summer-fall 1976). Re-creation isn't simply about people coming and going: people leave for reasons and join because they feel their careers and the Group's trajectory are moving in the same direction. In the winter of 1975 Timothy Shelton who played Eilif left TPG because he wanted to test himself in commercial theatre and because TPG didn't offer him the range of roles or the position within the Group that he needed. At the end of the India tour James Griffiths (the Cook) left because he wanted to work in a "directorless" group in San Francisco. But even more basic shifts are taking place as long-time members of TPG create their own works separate from me, and we all re-construct relationships to each other. There is a

long history of working together: MacIntosh and I have been at TPG since 1967; Borst joined in 1969 summer and Gray later that year; LeCompte and Griffiths joined in 1970, Clayburgh in 1972, Sack in 1973, and Wawter in 1974. Rayvid has worked with TPG since 1973 but became a "provisional member" in 1975. Charney was taken on specifically for the India tour when Alexandra Ivanoff said she didn't want to make the trip.

The changes within TPG reached a critical stage during our India tour. Two rhythms interacted: (1) as individuals and as a theatre we met audiences, sponsors, and the multiplicity called India, itself undergoing stress and change during the Emergency; (2) within each of us and as TPG we began to work through—by means of two sets of talks, one in Calcutta in March and one at Juhu Beach near Bombay right after the tour's end in April—our past relationships, present circumstances, future arrangements. There's no doubt that the high of the tour—we were praised even when our work fell short—mixed with its difficulties to bring on the crisis within TPG. It's hard to adjust to a strange culture when you're running around the country on a breakneck schedule needing to perform artistically and socially at every stop. More so when, as we wanted, we didn't get transplanted from one Western style hotel to another—but lived with families, in Indian style tourist bungalows and, as much as time allowed, interacted through workshops and meetings with Indian theatre people. So I'm writing not only a travel journal but an exposition of the group-making process as I see it manifesting itself under stress. I'll probe as deeply as I can how the tour worked on TPG: I'll make suggestions for future tours. But first I must review how *Mother Courage* (MC) was developed in New York, and how its preparation relates to TPG's over-all work.

*Work on MC in New York*

We began in April 1974, the same time we decided to come to India. All roles are cast from inside TPG. This in-looking leads to "role clusters", a chorus-like effect as different characters are played by the same performers and costumes carry over from one role to another. For examples, Borst and Griffiths play Recruiter and Sergeant in scene 1 and Lieutenant and Sergeant in scene 11; Gray and LeCompte play the peasants in scene 5, 10, 11, 12; Gray and Shelton play Swiss Cheese and Eilif and the two soldiers in scene 6. The blue officer's coat is worn by Recruiter Poldi in scene 3, Clerk in scene 6, and Lieutenant; the khaki soldier's coat is worn by Sergeant in scene 1, Soldier in scenes 3 and 6, and Sergeant in scene 11. But necessity and chance also operate: only the Chaplain and Cook aren't in scene 1; when Shelton left TPG, Rayvid took the roles of soldier and peasant son, while Clayburgh took Eilif. Desire also counts: LeCompte wanted to play the General in scene 2—and this meshed with my wanting to show a woman in a role traditionally linked to male power. In costume she looked like South Vietnamese dictator Ki; this added parody to the role. Also everyone was musician, stagehand, supper-server, and reader of the introductions to scenes. Seeing the performer playing Eilif adjust the ropes, hearing the one playing (mute) Katrin read the introduction to scene 2, or getting supper served by the person playing the Chaplain all help open conceptual spaces



between performers and roles, dramatic narrative and theatrical environment. These methods, long a part of TPG's work, agree well with Brecht's *verfrumsdungeffekt*.

From April through June 1974 we worked upstairs at the Performing Garage in a space 40' by 25'. Our main theatre was full of the environment for Sam Shepard's *The Tooth of Crime* which we were performing four times a week. We worked on *MC* about 5 hours a day, four days a week. *Tooth* closed in June and we began teaching days at NYU—rehearsals of *MC* shifted to the 50' by 35' by 18' (height) main theatre, and we worked four nights a week from 7 to 11 during July and half of August. Then we left on a tour of Europe with *Tooth*. (The summer was very full: part of the NYU work was developing the script of David Gaard's *The Marilyn Project* which opened 18 months later in December 1975.) During the six weeks' work on *MC*, Clayburgh and Jerry Rojo set up the basic environment: a "wagon-store" area against the west wall, a bridge across the center of the room (later demolished), galleries at two levels all around (adapted from *Tooth*), an open pit 6' by 25' by 8' deep along the north wall. We decided to play several scenes outdoors on Wooster Street which runs along the east side of our theatre building. It wasn't until November 1974 that we rehearsed *MC* full time, five days a week, six or seven hours a day. It opened in February 1975.

After one read-through the performers were on their feet wrestling with the physical problems: what should the wagon be? how does Courage move? what props were essential? what sounds does Katrin make? etc. etc. I don't believe in "work around the table" or talk-analysis of characters: it all happens up against the problems of staging, and in constructing not just characterization but the entire world of the performance, including the roles of the spectators. I get the performers moving around, with someone feeding lines so the words are learned through the ear, as speech. I've seen the same technique used in Jatra rehearsals. Performers work from the situations of the play, improvising, testing moves, gestures, arrangements, readings. I select blocking and line-readings from what's offered—my job is like that of a sculptor building up and whittling down material already there. Everything is kept fluid for many weeks. But it's not a question of vagueness: one concrete solution yields to another in an exploratory sequence of experiments.

For example, at first the wagon was a costume trunk on wheels to which we attached ropes. After a week this was rejected, and with it the whole idea of a rolling wagon. Any wagon of appropriate size would dominate our theatre as a center-piece environment like the one we already had for *Tooth*. A rolling wagon automatically referred us to Brecht's (and every other) *MC* production making it impossible to investigate the play in a totally new American way. Soon we began to use the idea of a "store" anchored against the west end of our theatre. But then the problem was how to physicalize pulling, trekking the roads, back-bending labor; how to show one person exploiting another through oppressive labor and the transformation of human beings into animals dragging a load. Rojo, Clayburgh, and I discussed

pulleys, ropes, blocks-and-tackle. One afternoon in May, Clayburgh arrived with this stuff—and immediately the performers tested it. Shelton ran his feet bloody trying to pull free from Macintosh's hold—but the pulley system gave her a three-to-one advantage: here was the physical expression of exploitation and one person's control over another. Clayburgh hitched the tackle to the wall and put Borst on the hook. The visual-sonic effect was stunning: leaning out at a 45 degree angle, running with all his might but getting nowhere, the tackle jangling behind him, the ropes rising and falling in rhythm with his strides: scene 7 was born. The equipment was flexible: ropes could divide the space any way; they could be strung at any angle; they could hoist, drop, pull, and hold. From that afternoon Clayburgh began working out in detail how the rope-and-pulley system would be used in each scene. With only slight modification this system was used in India exactly as in New York. And from the beginning in 1974 it was clear that everyone would help in scene shifts—these were to be an integral part of the performance.

Paul Dessau's music was from the very start of rehearsals another backbone of the production. If the text and actions were experimented with freely, we applied ourselves with rigor to the Dessau score. Thus a dialectic operated at the center of the rehearsal process. Richard Fire worked with us through June. Thereafter Ivanoff, a classical singer, became TPG's musical director. Her work went beyond teaching the Dessau score. She trained people in singing, combined traditional musical discipline with an appetite for new ways to make sound. Both these trends are heard in *MC*. They also reach back to TPG work in *Tooth*, *Concert* (1971), *Commune* (1970), and *Makbeth* (1969).

Brecht posits a dialectic between business, war, and dehumanization: the interaction of war and business results in dehumanization. No full-scale war has been fought in America since the Civil War and the wars against the American Indians of the 19th century. So I decided to emphasize business and through it to manifest the whole system. All details were organized accordingly. The south wall of the theatre was plastered with a mixture of super-market food ads and armed forces enlistment posters. As spectators enter the theatre they come to me where I sit behind a large cash-register collecting the admissions' charge—no tickets were sold in advance, everyone paid cash at the door. Each time money is taken, exchanged, or mentioned throughout the performance the register bell is rung: from the first spectator in to the moment when Courage gives the Peasant Woman some dollars to bury Katrin the register bell itemizes each transaction. Vawter counts the night's receipts at his desk near his drum-set; real cash is used as props and about \$50 is in circulation; a "gold brick" monopro is used to ikonize the valuable items Courage accumulates and sells, and as Swiss Cheese's cash box. In scene 6 Katrin saves the "gold brick" even at the cost of being raped. Courage curses the war and throws the brick down at the end of scene 6—but then she changes her mind and clutches the brick to her breast. Yvette takes cash from the soldiers who patronize her prostitute's business; and it is Poldi's money that Yvette loans to Courage to ransom Swiss Cheese. But Courage gets the money only when she mortgages the store-wagon, and her haggling costs Swiss Cheese his life. Courage is always doing business—yet the more business she does the poorer she gets.

In TPG performers develop roles on their own. As director I'm concerned with the continuity of training and, for each production, with the visual and sonic scores. Directing is mostly watching and selecting. I comment on rhythms, balance between silence and sound, gestures, groupings. I find in what the performers do things to be retained and things to be eliminated. I make suggestions—but my inventions are based on theirs. I move around to all the places where the audience will be: I'm not interested in a single-perspective picture but a whole environment. I don't talk much about the psychology of characters, feelings, motivations, or objectives. First of all, my colleagues are better trained and more competent in these matters than I; secondly, as Stanislavski showed in his "method of physical actions", effects will arise on their own if the physical score is precise. What we do discuss is the physical score, the technical aspects—how everything is to be integrated, and the meaning of the play in social terms as it is worked out concretely in the production through the fundamental interaction between performers and spectators. I've given examples in the uses of ropes and money; but every aspect is worked through in meticulous detail. Improvisation is a valuable training and rehearsal tool, but in performance it is unreliable. Of course, performers working so close to spectators deal with contingencies—but these are best described as permutations on the score, not improvisations.

Triumphs of acting arise from patience, repetition, and the ability to re-do scenes that've been unchanged for months. In TPG we have no fear of developing idiosyncratic, divergent, or even contradictory interpretations if these are—or lead to—meeting places of an individual performer's impulses and the production's logic. So much fails, one or the other, and great performing happens only when the two meet. This method pulls us off-course for weeks as when we tried again and again to find a balance between Gray's one-syllable-at-a-time Swiss Cheese and Brecht's simpleton Christ. Once an action is accepted it is rehearsed ruthlessly. It took many hours to score Katrin's death fall in scene 11 with the heel of her red boot caught on the edge of the ladder; or Yvette's sexual poses during the intercourse section of scene 3 so that the transfer of money from the soldiers to Yvette is visually prominent; or the cracked-voice lullaby Courage sings to Katrin's corpse in scene 12 followed by her hyena-like stripping of the corpse of its resellable clothes. At the end of the play Courage is hitched to every rope in the theatre: she is enmeshed in her own web, she carries the audience with her, the whole space seems to be moving. To stage this Clayburgh worked backwards from scene 12 to scene 5 figuring how each rope had to be set so that all could be finally gathered at a single terminus. It was only after five months' work that scenes were run through without stopping—to run through too soon freezes work, reducing its experimental potential. Even after *MC* opened we met three hours before each performance for warm-ups, notes on the previous performance with suggestions for the show at hand, rehearsals of scenes and music. Months before *MC* opened—while it was very rough—spectators came to open rehearsals. In July these spectators were students from our NYU workshops; in November colleagues from other theatres and friends came; the general public was invited through newspaper ads in December. Thus *MC* developed under

the public eye and retains the style of a tribunal. But also there is a sense of celebration—heightened by the full supper served after scene 3. In India this supper was more of a snack—but in America it is a full meal at a cheap price. Audiences at open rehearsals, and during the run too (performers talk to the spectators during the supper), share their reactions, make suggestions, and through their very behavior help test the production as it develops. The spectator isn't a numb consumer welcome only after the creative work is done, but part of the process from its most formative stages. And the creative work is never ended—even during the fall of 1975—while TPG was preparing four new works—changes were made in *MC*. And in India too changes were made.

### *The Schedule, The People*

We arrived in Delhi on the morning of February 3, twelve of us on the Air India weekly charter from Amsterdam. Joan and I have been to India before, in 1971. At the airport were Suresh Awasthi who originated the idea of TPG coming to India, Rajinder Nath of Abhiyan our Delhi sponsors, and V. Ramamurthy (Murti), our Indian tech director. An immediate plunge into work: we accept the old gym at the Modern School as the place to build the environment; Clayburgh negotiates with Amrit Lal Nayar, a contractor, to supply us with "slotted angles" and plywood and we decide to haul the environment around India rather than build from scratch at each site. The expense of acquiring the stuff and trucking it was not expected. Also we learned that our Delhi budget was to be met from box office—thus ticket prices would be at Rs. 10, very high, and still there'd be a big loss. In fact, the same box office arrangement was made at Lucknow, while at Calcutta, Bhopal, and Bombay our sponsors took responsibility for meeting living and production costs. But everywhere the tickets ranged up to Rs. 10. We had a grant of \$21,000 from the JDR 3rd Fund—and with this we paid international and India travel, salaries, per diem allowances, and costs in Delhi and Lucknow. The grant didn't cover all these expenses, nor was it meant to; TPG's savings and other contributions added \$13,000 to the kitty. The tour was very expensive, possibly too much so. In the future we ought to develop a simple, easily transportable or, even better, duplicatable environment. But nothing can save on the biggest expense, international air travel, which came to over \$11,000.

With a hired crew of laborers, help from E. Alkazi and students of the National School of Drama (NSD) and volunteers from different Delhi theatres, work on the environment went well. Alkazi arranges for us to borrow lights not only for Delhi but for the whole tour. Then a big snag: Customs won't release our costumes, props, ropes and pulleys until we put up a Rs. 81,000 bond. After two days of negotiations I personally guarantee the money underwriting a Letter of Credit TPG brought to India to cover expenses; my guarantee is in turn guaranteed by the United States Educational Foundation in India. (I'm a Fulbright scholar this year); and, finally, Grindlay's bank puts up the Rs. 81,000 bond and our stuff is liberated. Waiting for hours at the Palam customs shed I stare at a sign over the officer's desk: "I am not interested in excuses for delay. I am interested only

in a thing done" Jawaharlal Nehru. We get our equipment on February 7, two days before dress rehearsal.

On February 10 MC opens to a full house; but by the end about one-third had gone. Possibly they didn't expect a four-hour performance during which they sat on hard wood planks, on the floor, or moved about. My immediate reactions as recorded in my notebook:

*Environment too long for its width. Acoustics bad. One-third of the audience left at intermission; one-third very appreciative. They rushed up to the performers and me after the show and showered us with congratulations. Mostly authentic, some just being polite. The show itself was slow and ragged. . . . Mistakes last night: Joan dropped her "pulpit" speech in scene 3; I got the ropes wrong in scene 2; Griffiths went dry for lines in scene 9; the rope got stuck and Katrin's ladder wouldn't go up for scene 11—we had to stop the show, fix it, and then go on. It was very hard to hear. People strained their voices. In the other places we should make the environment better proportioned. The theatre is filthy—the dirt road outside means dirt gets tracked in and the place gets suffocatingly dusty so it's hard to speak.*

February 11

And Joan said in her notebook:

*I was rolling in dirt. I breathed dirt, dry earth dirt. I strained my voice between a dirt-clogged throat and bad acoustics. I felt like I could have been anywhere on tour doing MC not in India. . . . I was exhausted, hungry, sick to my stomach. The wheelbarrow—used as a market basket—didn't work. I slipped and fell on the wagon steps. I spilled a bucket of water on an audience member in scene 3. And yet the Indians loved it. One man squeezed my hand so hard I thought he had broken my knuckles. Scene 12 took on a special meaning to me here of an Indian peasant woman beggar tromping through the dusty countryside, stumbling, enduring . . . During the show I was not at all nervous, only angry or concentrated on what needed to be done: keeping the story clear. The audience's reaction was pleasing, but being a perfectionist I wasn't satisfied. It could've been better.*

February 11

It got better. The best performance in Delhi—and one of the best of the tour—occurred on February 13, Friday night. It takes a great audience to make a great performance. They kept pushing in until there were too many of them, probably about 350. The performers bitched—but again and again I've seen that when something unexpected and hard happens—too big a house, a sudden error, a part of the environment that fails, etc.—the performance either collapses or overcomes the challenge luminously: through all the work the clarity of the play's themes and the skill of the performers, the sheer beauty of the event, comes through as it does in athletics.

At the same time that the performances were bringing TPG together, long-range problems troubled us all. On February 11 I wrote:

*New rhythms are needed: a theatre with (1) strong leadership working for (2) continuous training and opening up (3) doing performances in many places before different kinds of people (4) alternating between commercial and non-commercial work. . . . TPG is no longer the arena, if it ever was, where people (all, including me) can go beyond.*

Instead of feeling encouraged-liberated by the group structure, I felt suffocated. I wasn't alone in thinking this way. Steve, Liz and Spalding wanted to direct and/or compose their own work; Joan wanted to find autonomy as a performer similar to what the others sought as directors and composers; Leeny wasn't sure what she wanted to do; etc. At the same time we didn't want to bust TPG up. We were looking for new arrangements. As often happens in our Group people began talking informally with each other about these feelings—and pressure built to have formal meetings.

In Delhi too the first inklings of the "sex problem" appeared. In scene 3, Yvette and three soldiers perform a stylized mimicry of copulation while on the other side of the space Courage smears Katrin's face with mud in order to make her unattractive to rapacious soldiers. The meaning is clear: in war a safe face is one smeared with filth, and love is mostly a business transaction. Two days after we opened Principal M. N. Kapur of the Modern School told me that this scene had repercussions among the governing board of the school. He also felt that it distorted our production—some people came to MC just to see it, others stayed away because of it.

TPG performing MC

Picture by Pablo Bartholemew



I discussed the issue with the Group. They argued that TPG hadn't come to India to show how Indians would stage *MC* but how Americans did. I felt torn because Kapur had been of great help to us, exceedingly generous. Just before a performance, as I was about to insist on some modifications in the scene, Kapur came up to me and said: "No, don't change anything. Do what is right for your work". My respect for him is deep,

The performances in Chandigarh were cancelled for lack of a suitable space. The Group went on to Lucknow while Steve and I went to Chandigarh to run a workshop. This and other workshops will be discussed later. When we got to Lucknow people were settled at the Government Tourist Bungalow only three blocks from the motor garage where the environment was being set up. Murti tells of delays up to six hours trucking the environment down from Delhi through octroi posts. Experience is teaching us about the local, regional, cultural, religious, political, and linguistic rivalries that both enrich and debilitate India. These rivalries shadowed us in Delhi and Calcutta, and affect us directly in Lucknow. Originally our Lucknow sponsors were Darpan, and the contact Awasthi gave me was Kunwar Narain. On October 10, 1975 I wrote a detailed letter to all our sponsors outlining exactly what TPG needed to stage *MC*. The three page single-spaced letter emphasized the following:

1. *TPG does not perform in a proscenium theatre or in any way separate the audience from the performers. As the enclosed photographs show, the audience sits among the performers, or stands around them. . . . Thus instead of a regular theatre we need a large room for our performance. . . . When we do perform on a proscenium stage we put the entire audience on the stage—no one sits in the house, the curtain remains closed. Thus we can perform on a very large proscenium stage. Also we can perform in a gymnasium or a large banquet hall. In every case we need large quantities of scaffolding to build up the theatre.*

2. *The performance of MC takes nearly 4 hours. After scene 3 we serve a supper to the audience . . . This meal is not "entertainment" but still it is very much part of the performance; it is important to the themes of the play.*

Incidentally, the supper did not work well at all in India. It was more an interval snack than a continuation of Courage's business. Indians don't eat at 7.30; they like to sit down; they eat in family groupings. Also all we could arrange to serve were snacks. In America the meal is actually a good bargain of bread, cheese, soup with meat and/or vegetables, fruit, and beverage. The performers assist in serving the meal. It was cooked by people from our workshops (who were paid for the job) upstairs at our theatre.

3. *One of the scenes is played in the street outside the theatre. In New York a big door opens and the audience remains inside looking through the door at the performers who are standing in the street. On tour we are sometimes able to play this scene as in New York—but we can also play it indoors if necessary.*

In Delhi this scene worked well because the Modern School Gymnasium had a door that could be used like the one in New York. And in Bhopal where we performed on the large proscenium stage of the Kela Parishad's Ravindra Bhawan this scene was played in a field behind the theatre using an ox cart as *MC*'s wagon. A special platform was constructed in Calcutta because the

stage door was 12 feet above the street level. In Bombay the whole play was outdoors in the Cathedral and John Connon School courtyard and scene 9 was played within the regular performing space. In Lucknow the scene was played at the entrance to the motor garage, but not actually in the street. Nowhere did the scene work as well as in New York where Wooster Street carries light traffic and the scene gathers a small crowd of passersby. Also during winter the weather enters the theatre, spectators wrap themselves in their coats, the feeling of the final scenes (9 through 12) is very bleak. Courage's talk about winter is actualized.

On 29 October I had a long letter from Narain. "I could not write to you immediately", he said, "as I waited for a confirmation from Darpan who wanted a little time to consider all your requirements and discuss them with their members so that they could make a definite commitment to you. They now assure me that adequate arrangements can be made". I heard nothing from Darpan until 13 November when B. C. Gupta wrote agreeing to my proposed schedule and other details. That same day Gupta wrote Murti saying, "the whole Darpan team will be at your disposal". So I was surprised when I arrived in Lucknow to find out that Darpan wasn't sponsoring TPG at all. At the last minute Raj Bisaria and his Theatre Arts Workshop had taken over. I never found out what happened—only that no love was lost between the rival groups. Everywhere the Indian theatre is plagued by factionalism. But the modern theatre—particularly that wing that wants to do new work, experimental work—is not strong enough to afford factionalism. Throughout my week in Lucknow I split my time between Narain—who I found to be intelligent and perceptive—and Bisaria who worked day and night with his crew to get *MC* up and going. Things were tense all around.

The environment was extraordinary, a motor garage, where amid piles of tires, broken down cars, and steel girders we set up *MC*. We didn't use the whole 100 by 200 foot space but lashed slotted angles to girders. *MC* looked beautiful but the Lucknow audience was confused; they lay back from the production. Bisaria explained that relatively few people in Lucknow know English, especially the American dialect TPG speaks. And environmental theatre was new for Lucknow—though I never tired of explaining the structural and conceptual links between it and traditional Indian theatre like Jatra, Kathakali, Ramlila. But a gap has opened between modern Indian theatre and traditional forms. The issue is complex because the traditional forms are exciting theatrically but ideologically and socially they are often reactionary; or, as in Jatra, commercial melodramas. Modern theatre's problem is how to use the staging and direct relation to the audience of the folk forms without at the same time falling into their reactionary *mytho-poeisis*. The answer is not in imitation or adaptation. Rather I suggest that writers, designers, and actors fully experience the folk forms, and get training in these forms—and then "forget" what they've learned; fully digesting the techniques so that these become part of the muscle of their own work. It is at the level of body consciousness, integration of music and rhythmic movement, environmental staging, and direct contact with the audience that modern groups can use traditional theatre.

One of the best things at Lucknow was how about 75 poor people came to the show. At first they stood outside—they could see in because one side of the building had no wall. Not all the tickets were sold and during a scene change I gestured for the poor to come in. Most of the adults held back but the kids came. They found places on the floor and in the corners of the environment: they were skilled at fitting into crevices, spaces in the social structure rejected by richer people. And about 50 people scamped across the roof, peering down through the opening between the peaked roof and the horizontal walls. Paying spectators ignored this new group, or moved away slightly. I remembered my 9 years in the deep South of the USA where blacks were legislatively "part of" and "equal to" whites but actually kept "apart from" in a conceptual if not physical sense.

By Lucknow TPG had come down from the high of first arrival in India. Almost everyone was sick. And problems that troubled us in America, but were put aside for the tour, reasserted themselves. These boiled down to the fact that TPG is 9 years old, its members are entering or in their 30s (and I'm 42). People want "autonomy" and their own "artistic identities". They don't want to be known as "members of Richard Schechner's Performance Group". At the same time I want my leadership acknowledged within the Group. By the end of our stay in Lucknow everyone knew that we needed some full group discussions and these were set for Calcutta.

The Abhinav Bharati theatre off Shakespeare Sarani in Calcutta wasn't finished when we set up there. The audience entered through piles of junk, scraps from sets, hardware—and passed over a plank-boardwalk to the stage where we'd set up *MC*. The environment combined folk and modern elements—the gird was of bamboo, and bamboo railings lined the galleries. Everything went smoothly in Calcutta because of the superb organization led by Shyamanand Jalan and Bishu Sureka. They were of great help on the rest of the tour too. Also in Calcutta we picked up our relationship with Badal Sircar who'd come to North America and worked with TPG in 1972. Space limitations prevent me from discussing Sircar's newest work—done outdoors, in villages, in environmental spaces—*Spartacus*, *Michil*, *Bhoma*. I say only that of the modern theatre I've seen in India Sircar's Satabdi and the Repertory Company of the NSD are doing the most important work. Performances in Calcutta went smoothly except for the "sex issue" which came to a head after an unsigned review in the Hindi paper, *Vishvavitra*, proclaimed: "The most daring use of this environment is made when the actors, both male and female, in full view of the audience and in full illumination strip down completely and change their costumes. In this manner they educate the audience—acting out everything, even the way a woman is disgraced as the soldiers fornicate with her". The day this review appeared we were besieged by men who offered me up to Rs. 100 for a ticket; women with tickets stayed away; men fought on the street in front of the theatre. At interval I said, "The sex scene is over, so if that's what you came for, eat your supper and go". Many left, maybe forty men.

The "sex issue" exploded in Calcutta but it was there in Delhi and Bhopal too. Granted that standards vary greatly from USA to India, *MC* is



*MC performed in Singjole*

*Picture by Richard Schechner*

not a sex show. Costume changes are done in the Green Room—dressing room which is intentionally visible for the same reason that we show every technical aspect of the production; but no one is naked—and there's absolutely no connection between the Yvette part of scene 3 and the costume changes. The scene itself balances Yvette's business of prostitution with Courage's smearing mud on Katrin's face so that she'll appear unattractive to the sex-starved soldiers. Ironically, the males who stormed the Abhinav Bharati were like the soldiers of scene 3—and at root neither soldiers nor spectators are to be blamed. The fault lies with a repressive sexual censorship.

On March 18, under arrangements made by Sircar and Barain Saha, we performed *MC* in Singjole, a village about 3 hours outside of Calcutta. In fact, however, one of our Calcutta sponsors (not Jalan or Sureka) opposed this performance. Shortly before leaving for India I got a letter from Calcutta dated 5 January 1976:

*I would strongly suggest, after consulting people in the theatre field, not to produce the play in any village as it will not only cost a huge amount of money and hard work, but also it will be very difficult to attract the required audience, as the atmosphere in our villages has not yet reached the standard to appreciate productions like yours. Please clarify the situation immediately.*



I wrote back on 16 January:

*It is very important to us to be able to play in villages—we want our work to reach the people who live in the villages, no matter how difficult that may be. We are willing to adjust our staging to suit village conditions: outdoors spaces, courtyards, bad lighting or no stage lighting at all. . . . It is most important to us that we perform for a cross-section of the Indian public. This is the other reason why we insist on trying to perform, for no charge, in a village near Calcutta.*

The production cost almost nothing because we set up under two large trees using them as the grid for our rope system; a trench was dug that came very close to the pit we have in New York; we lit the show with petromax lanterns; a harmonium substituted for the piano; the audience sat on the ground all around; there was no interval and no supper.

Instead of the 800 people we'd expected—two times the most we'd ever played MC for—about 2,000 people came. As elsewhere in folk theatre the women and young children sat on one side and the men and older boys on the other. The audience stayed for about 3 of the 4 hours (we began at 7.30); at the end there were maybe 750 people left. Sircar introduced the play and before each scene he outlined its action in Bengali. But we weren't skilled at projecting our voices to such a large crowd; and MC isn't the kind of play that can be suddenly shouted. I wrote in my notebook:

*Aesthetics went out the window. . . . We adjusted our staging and made it broad: telling the story through big actions. . . . We didn't contact this audience so much through our work as simply by our presence. It was a Fair and we were entertainment.*

We cut large sections of scenes 6 and 8, and all of 9 and 10. The morning after the performance I went around Singjole with Saha talking to people. They liked the performance though they didn't understand its language or anything except the barest story outline. "What did you like?" "The songs, the falling, the fighting, the killing. The way Mother tried to save her children. The girl who couldn't talk". But a Bengali director who saw the performance said, "They were being polite. The only reason they didn't bust up the show was because you are white".

Group members found the performance "liberating"—they were free from the restraint that comes when an audience listens closely—they could go as far as possible in physicalizing their roles, and playing with words as sounds rather than as cognitive speech. As I've seen elsewhere spectators felt free to talk among themselves, wander to and from the performance, and pay attention only to what interested them. Peter Brook and Robert Wilson, among others, have experimented with this kind of rhythms—and I've seen it at performances of Chhau, Kathakali, and Ramlila. The performance at Singjole pinpointed the biggest shortcomings of the tour: (1) we didn't play to ordinary people in the cities; (2) the one time we had a popular audience they couldn't follow the play.

My suggestions for future tours: (1) make tickets available free to theatre workers and students training for theatre. These people should see

two or more performances so that they grasp the production at the professional level of techniques. After this close viewing, discussions are held between the visiting artists and the local people; these discussions are followed by workshops; (2) either by extending the run or by direct subsidy at least one-third of the tickets are allocated for poor people at a cost no more than that of a front stall at the movies. Because TPG doesn't use fixed seating the poor, middle classes, and rich will either mix or segregate themselves; (3) TPG must make productions that work visually if we are going to play for non-English speakers. And if we are going to play outdoors to large crowds then either microphones or clear loud speaking must be used. These suggestions are based on the fact that groups like TPG rarely visit India and the exchange must be managed so that both sides get the most out of it.

Before the meetings in Calcutta I made some notes about what kind of theatre I wanted, and my place in it:

*Problems: (1) How to make a theatre for the poor, the workers, the office people and still survive and still do theatre that is important personally. (2) How to involve the audience at every level and still keep professional standards. . . . I want to get to these things: (1) Performances for "people" on subjects or themes of importance to society—to do these shows free, where "people" are. (2) Experiment with the whole range of what performance is—getting to, doing, going from—and to have performers and audience conscious of and participating in this whole range. It means opening not only rehearsals but pre-show notes and warm-ups and post-show discussions and parties to the audience. (3) Find or invent new kinds of psychophysical, psychosocial, and sociophysical exercises. To advance the knowledge of training—especially breathing and making sound.*

*These meetings are good because they open the possibility for change—even total liberation. For me the liberation can come in two ways: Control over TPG so it is an instrument of mine; or freedom from the Group so I can pursue these experiments on my own. In either case I can get free of the ego struggles. I no longer think the Group must reflect what I hope the coming society should be. I now think the instrument must be sharp and held in strong hands—and when it cuts it ought not cut into itself but into the world around it. Otherwise people will mostly subjectivize their lives, turn on or into each other, fail to do anything more than "express" themselves—while not relating either to the society or to theoretical problems of performance theory, the art. It's the intersection of these two that interests me—not "holding together" a group (whatever its reputation). Reputations come and go, even art passes. But certain theories and social systems abide, if not for all time, for a long time. I want to teach, change the order of society, and have-make fun.*

The meetings took place on 16 and 17 March. The formality of a closed meeting extending over two days guarantees that everyone has a chance to say their say. When the Calcutta meetings were over we knew two things: people other than me would direct and in other ways seek their autonomy (this process began in 1973 with Borst directing *The Beard*), and more meetings were necessary after the tour to find out whether or not TPG should continue as a group and if so, how.

After Calcutta, Bhopal was like emptiness itself. It reminded me of the American southwest and the dry mountains of Mexico. But amid the

feeling of newness was the sense that the trees had been cut down, erosion was clawing the land, gutting it. The organizing for TPG by Ashok Bajpeyi and Satyen Kumar was a model of efficiency. Kumar visited Delhi on 14 February, saw a performance, met with me, Murti, Nath and Awasthi; he filed a report on 16 February that formed the basis of our Bhopal program. Everything was covered, including TPG eating habits. Kumar estimated that our performances would cost Rs. 10,000 of which Rs. 6,000 could be earned at the box office if tickets were pegged at Rs. 10. We set up at the Ravindra Bhawan. To encourage a breeze we left the auditorium open but permitted no one to sit there; we used the outdoor theatre and sloping lawn for scenes 9 through 12. The work at Bhopal went so efficiently that we invited Benu Ganguly, technical director, to come with us to Bombay.

If Calcutta is India's New York, then Bombay is her Los Angeles. All of TPG just slid into Bombay's luxury like falling into velvet. Except for one night at a Tamasha I saw nothing of Bombay's other side. In its segregation of the poor Bombay is very like American cities with their ghettos and "ethnic" neighbourhoods. The space for *MC* at the CJC School was a magnificent courtyard surrounded on three-sides by galleried buildings. We adapted our environment to the large space making room for 500 spectators, and another 150 (at reduced prices) up in the galleries. I watched some of each show from up top: it was like looking at a terrain map on which figures made dance patterns; the sound rose splendidly so all the dialogue was heard. Everything arranged for us by Narayana Menon and K. K. Suvarna of the National Centre for the Performing Arts was first-rate. The shows were near perfect—we'd learned from Singjole to physicalize a bit more than in America, to speak a little slower, and to eliminate extraneous gestures. The audience understood English and knew Brecht.

On the last night's performance in Calcutta signs appeared in the theatre: "Schechner Has No Right To Destroy Brecht's Epic Theatre". "We Want Brecht Not Environmental Theatre". "Environmental Theatre Is A Deliberate Distortion Of Brecht's Philosophy Of Theatre". "Long Live Bertolt Brecht, The Dramatist Of The People". "Brecht Dealt With War, Schechner Deals With Orgasm". "Schechner Preaches Community Involvement By Making You Pay For It". "Brecht Spoke of Reality And Struggle, Schechner Deals With Gags, Stunts And Sexual Perversion". And on 5 April a review appeared in the (Bombay) *Times of India* that praised the production: "Fantastic! Never before has a Bombay audience been exposed to such an enriching theatrical experience. . . . A summative statement on drama; an unforgettable event. Thrice tears welled up in my eyes. . . . Through it all, through the words and the action and the noise and the novelty and the enormous planning and intellection behind it Brecht's deep humanism emerges. . . . Mother Courage is Man (sic) confronting the absurd. As performed she is vigorous, harsh, pragmatic, tender, defiant, raw as a scoop of earth, ineluctably human". These contradictory estimates of the production raise the same question: Is TPG true to Brecht, and if not, does it matter?

I don't think fidelity matters much, though I do think TPG's *MC* is true to Brecht. Most of the time the author's intentions aren't known. Who's

to say what Sophocles, Kalidasa, or Shakespeare intended? Should Greek tragedies be performed only outdoors in semicircular theatres seating 17,000 spectators who attend as part of yearly civic celebrations? And should these plays be offered up as three tragedies followed by one satyr play? If so, the academies had better instruct us on how to recreate the Athenian city-state. And so on for every past epoch. And if fidelity means the "interior meaning" of a text, then that is obviously a question of interpretation. Even garrulous Shaw didn't say everything about his plays; and most writers are mum. Fidelity is even less important with Brecht because he staged his plays as he saw fit, and left his "model books" as evidence—while urging that these not be slavishly followed. Of *MC* a film exists of the Brecht-Weigel production.

I have long taken the position, and hold it now, that a text is a skeleton, an outline, a plan, a map—but that the body, picture, structure, and territory of a play can be actualized only in performance, at the immediate and unique encounter of performers and spectators; and that rehearsal is a research process for unfolding and discovering what the performance will be. As for "changing the text" there are times when that's good and times when it's bad. A classic text that is in no danger of being forgotten is open to retelling, especially if it is to be translated anyway; also neglected plays that will rarely be done in their pristine form. Actually some of the great plays—Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, many of Molière's plays, Tulsidas' *Ramacharitmanas* (as chanted in Ramlila), not to mention Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*—are versions of older dramas or oral recitations. On the other hand, if a play is new I think the author's words should be respected—he has the right to see his play reach the public first as he wrote it. As a matter of fact, we made no text changes in *MC* except to cut all of scene 4 up to the "Song of the Great Capitulation".

But the objections, and praise, are based not on textual changes but on tone—on a sense that TPG didn't do Brecht as Brecht would have done it; and therefore we did it wrong. *MC* is not one of Brecht's hardline plays like *The Measure's Taken*. It belongs to a later period along with *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. Written in 1938, premiered in 1939 in Zurich, *MC* is as much an anti-war play as a condemnation of capitalist greed. In the character of Courage, Brecht internalizes the dialectical conflict which breaks Shen Te and Shui Ta into two persons: Courage is both loving and cruel, generous and stingy, wise and stupid, the best humanity has to offer and an animal. At the end she is neither a hero nor a hyena, but both. Brecht's own *MC* production (I've studied the model book and seen the movie) is, if anything, more sentimental than TPG's: (1) the famous open-mouth silent scream of Weigel-Courage when she hears the rifle shots that kill Swiss-Cheese but can't express (out loud) her grief; (2) her mourning-lullaby sung over Katrin's corpse: in Brecht's production Courage allows Katrin to be buried fully clothed although her clothes are of market-value—in TPG's production we followed the logic of "hyena of the battlefield" (Brecht's description of Courage) to its extreme by having Courage strip the outer garments off Katrin; (3) the final action of Brecht's production: on a gray, large, empty stage Courage alone lifts

the heavy yoke of her wagon, hitches herself to it, and draws the vehicle two full times around the floor of the revolving stage. I don't criticize Brecht for these choices which point up Courage's humanity, grief, and (pardon) courage; the actions are balanced by others that show her bitterness, contempt, cynicism, and brutality. But I point out that Brecht the director knew different than Brecht the author. Whether different equals better I will not say.

At another level altogether, TPG has been "true" to Brecht the author even when we've differed with Brecht the director. There is no rolling wagon, but instead a store which is more in the American tradition; we serve supper; the final scenes are played outdoors or with the theatre open to the street. We didn't set the play in 17th century Europe in a war between Protestants and Catholics; we use modern costumes and no make-up. We have no separate orchestra playing offstage or from the pit—the performers play the music and all technical people play dramatic roles too. In these ways we out-Brechted Brecht: not only is the work of the theatre shown but theatre workers perform roles; and what is a better *verfrumdungeffekt* than seeing the performer playing Mother Courage play the flute, or the man playing the Chaplain set the ropes between scenes? These choices were made on the basis of how best to get the play across to our audience, and in terms of an environmental theatre we advocate as thoroughly as Brecht advocated his Epic Theatre. The underlying idea of TPG's production—the actualization of the play's inscape—is the same in TPG as with Brecht: a good woman who, in identifying herself with the Industrialists, the capitalists, makes choices against her own class interest (which is lower middle, not rich as she gives herself airs of being). Therefore she is systematically—not accidentally—ground down, defeated, and transformed into an animal pulling her own wagon. She is also a hyena of the battlefield, plundering corpses, selling to both sides, cheating, haggling, saving her own skin at the cost of her children's lives. But through all this, and Brecht knew it, she shows grit, a sense of humor with her wise-cracks aimed unfailingly at the generals, priests, kings, and popes. She has a sense of values consistent with Brecht's: she is cynical about religion and politics; she survives. As in *Circle* and *Good Woman* Brecht shows that the only good person in bad times is a bad person (Azdak); good people must act bad to survive in bad times. What the audience experiences is not a bad person getting worse—there's no educative value in that, and Brecht is fundamentally optimistic—but a good person forced to act bad in order to survive. What the audience learns to condemn is the (capitalist and war-making) system that makes Courage choose between her livelihood and a bribe to ransom her son Swiss Cheese.

#### *The Workshops, The Aftermath*

Under USIS auspices TPG ran workshops in Calcutta and Bombay; we also did workshops on our own in Delhi and in collaboration with our sponsors in Bhopal and Chandigarh. Also I gave slide lectures about our work and the films of *Dionysus* in 69 and *The Tooth of Crime* were shown. Workshop is the best introduction to TPG—but unfortunately an introduction that can be given to only a few people. There are other difficulties too. Our work is physical but Indian modern theatre workers are not familiar

with—and often are put off by—physical work. I mean simple exertion, as well as self-expression through movement, singing, unstructured sound-making, and touching. Exercises function as vessels—traditions actually—that contain and channel energies, often sexual and aggressive energies (which are normally repressed or redirected). A jumping kick may metaphorize hurting, a deep release of sound and a pelvic thrust may metaphorize sexual intercourse. Unlike traditional forms that already have a grammar (either abstract or mimetic), I try to help performers find in workshop their own mode of expression; later some of these image-actions are used in performance. The workshop is a kind of group socio-psychanalysis translated into theatrical terms: the space where the personal and the public intersect. I was afraid to go far with this kind of work in India: I didn't want to accept the responsibility of inviting the release of so much repressed energy when I was moving on in a matter of hours. Usually we taught breathing, panting, sound-making, a few of the psychophysical exercises (taken from Kathakali via Grotowski), and played theatre games and/or improvisations. Also a lot of discussion went on during the workshops—it was a healthy place to expound on TPG's work, demonstrate some of it, and invite participation. The deepest workshops took place after the tour when Joan and I could spend more time. In July we worked several times with Sircar's Satabdi. I watched and then participated in Debesh Chakravarty's work with his Epic Theatre. Joan and I exchanged work with The Puppets, directed by Ragunath Goswami in Calcutta. In September we did a five day (6 hours per day) workshop with the NSD Repertory in Delhi. This was very satisfying because the Rep people know each other well, are professionals, and wanted to go as far as they could. In October Joan worked more with them, as well as with students at the NSD.

One of the strangest workshops took place in Chandigarh on 23-4 February. Borst and I went there on the invitation of Balwant Gargi after MC performances were cancelled. Gargi had gathered theatre scholars and workers from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Afghanistan and other places to "experiment with the translation of the folk ballad Mirza Sahiban into performing arts terms and the resultant production will be performed in a natural rural setting." The time allotted was 23 February to 20 March. I don't know how it turned out, but it began like Alice's teaparty. Some of the visitors weren't performers; mixed in with them were Punjabi musicians who kept up a steady drumming and chanting behind many of the meetings. Gargi turned over the opening sessions to Steve and me, but I didn't have the foggiest idea what to do. We did standard voice work, warmups, and "line exercises"—where people face each other and exchange gestures, sounds, ways of walking, etc. What bothered me was that on paper Gargi's program read splendidly, but the participants didn't know how to break down the barriers between them—it wasn't their fault, there was no crucible prepared to melt down the divisions. And if Steve and I were supposed to provide the heat we found ourselves as disoriented as the others.

In my letter of 1 August 1974 to the JDR 3rd Fund's Porter McCray applying for the money to take TPG to India I outlined my aims:

*The entire Performance Group will participate in this tour. The tour will involve performing in Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay; studying at the Kathakali Kalamandalam in Kerala; observing traditional and ritual performances in various places in India; direct contact with Indian theatre and dance people; workshops and lecture-demonstrations at theatre centers. Along with Group projects several individual projects will also be worked out, including the possibility of a joint TPG-Indian production; various study projects in Indian arts.*

Except for Joan and me the last TPG member left India on 21 June. Most of my program beyond the performances, workshops, and lectures didn't happen. After the tour Clayburgh, Kas Self, Joan, and I saw Mayurbhanj, Purulia, and Seraikella Chhau, and studied Seraikella Chhau; later I studied Kathakali, Joan studied Hindustani singing, and we both studied yoga. Clayburgh was going to design a production in Delhi but the project collapsed. Discussions are going on that will bring me back to India to direct in Indian languages with Indian performers. Many Group members thought of staying in India till August, some even longer—so what happened? The meetings at Juhu actually stirred many people to go back to America and begin projects of their own. With me out of the USA until February 1977, time and facilities were available without danger of competition. Then during the tour there wasn't enough time at each center to see Indian theatre or to follow-up initial contacts with Indian theatre workers. We nearly doubled our planned number of performances in order to earn more money and to respond to the great popularity of *MC*. Our sponsors concentrated on making *MC* a success and few arrangements were made for us to see modern, traditional, folk, or ritual performances. The tour got to be a grind, and at the end of it people were sick, exhausted, and worn out. Actually I didn't anticipate how hard being in India would be for some people—at the level of different food, living conditions, lack of family, friends, and familiar diversions. Maybe I expected too much when I outlined my aims; or maybe those aims were mine and not TPG's. But the "corollary items" are in the long run as important as the impact of our performing. I consider this tour a success—but for next time I want to guarantee those items—the joint productions, intensive workshops, experience of Indian theatre, studies—that make a tour more than hit-and-run.



Picture by Sandip Ray

## Working with Bala

Satyajit Ray

A tall girl with long limbs and a round face doing a kind of dance I had never seen before against a giant sounding-board that was a feature of the now-vanished Senate Hall in Calcutta. The year was 1935, and the occasion was the All-Bengal Music Conference. I remember the applause that greeted Balasaraswati's first performance—and the first performance ever of Bharatnatyam—in Calcutta. I was a schoolboy then, growing up in my maternal uncle's house in South Calcutta. A friend of the family was the impresario Haren Ghosh. Three or four years ago, Harendra had taken us to see Uday Shankar making his debut in Calcutta. It was Harendra again who told us about Bharatnatyam, and the young South Indian dancer who was supposed to excel in it. Since we trusted Harendra's judgment in these matters, we all went to see Balasaraswati.

It didn't take long after her Calcutta performance for Bala to turn into a legendary figure in Indian classical dancing. When in 1966 my friend Dr. Narayana Menon asked me to make a short film on Balasaraswati, I was

delighted to accept the offer. Although I didn't fancy myself as a maker of documentaries, I felt that a film which would preserve the art of someone who was supreme in her field was worth making. I must say I felt a keen disappointment when negotiations broke down and the film had to be shelved. Judging by her performance in Calcutta at that time, Bala had seemed to be at the top of her form, and the one talk I had with her had suggested that she was eager that the film should be made.

What transpired to upset our plans I never found out. I accepted it philosophically as one of the many disappointments a film maker has to face in his career, little knowing that exactly ten years later the offer would come back to me, and from the same source, and that I would find myself in Madras with my crew, all set to film my half-hour homage to Bala.

As we drove to Bala's house on the morning after our arrival, I felt a twinge of regret at having missed her in her prime. I consoled myself with the thought that Bala filmed at fifty-eight was better than Bala not being filmed at all.

The regal presence that confronted us as we crossed the threshold of her house took my breath away. Bala had lost weight—due to diabetes, I'd been told—but had lost none of her poise and vitality. Face to face with her, I felt a fresh surge of enthusiasm for the film.

We sat in the light and airy drawing room, with Bala's illustrious ancestors looking down at us from the walls, drank coffee and talked about

Picture by Sandip Ray



the film. Bala could follow English but wouldn't speak it; so we spoke to her through her daughter Lakshmi. While she talked, or even while she listened or sat idle, I noticed that Bala kept flexing the long tapering fingers of her hands almost incessantly. It seemed as if the playful and restless fingers were an indication that she was perpetually poised on the edge of dancing.

I told Bala that the early part of the film would attempt to trace her career with the help of photographs, newspaper clippings and the like. In a matter of minutes, Lakshmi had brought out and dumped before us scores of scrapbooks and photo albums. It took us hours of poring over them to decide what we would need for our film.

I also wished to include a few glimpses of Bala at home. How did she spend her day, I asked her. Well, it turned out that she spent a lot of time in her garden among her flowers, and an almost equal amount of time in the kitchen cooking (we had a chance to find out how good she was at it). She also did her *puja* regularly, gave Lakshmi daily dancing lessons, played her favourite game of *pasha* with her, and occasionally entertained friends. I asked her if she would let us show in the film some of the things she had just described. "Anything you like", she replied, "except the cooking. I won't have you photograph me in the kitchen!" "What about a family meal with your daughter and your two brothers?" (Ranga and Vishwa were home on vacation from the USA where they teach.) "That's fine", she said, and her eyes twinkled as Lakshmi translated: "Mother says if you want to be realistic you have to show her phial of insulin right next to her plate".

The highpoint of my experience was, of course, the shooting of the musical items. We had decided to include two: a *padam* to display her mime and her singing, and a *varnam* to reveal the full range of her dancing. For the first we chose the ineffable *Krishnani Begane Baro* which I had seen her perform forty years ago, and on every subsequent occasion that she appeared in Calcutta. I had planned to shoot it in a seaside location and had found a beautiful, secluded beach about twenty miles from Madras on the way to Mamallapuram. I felt the open-air setting and the natural light would be a nice contrast to the *varnam* which I was going to shoot in artificial light in the studio against a black backdrop.

As we arrived on the beach on the day of the shooting (which happened to be our last day in Madras), I found a fairly strong breeze blowing. I asked Bala with some trepidation if this would interfere with her dancing. "Oh no", she said, "I can manage". And manage she did. I can think of no other dancer who can use her hand so that it serves the needs of *abhinaya* one moment, and comes down in a graceful arc the next to restrain a billowing sari.

It was Bala herself who chose the *varnam* 'Mohamana' for her second and final item in the film. I knew Bala could spin out a *varnam* for over an hour and hold a discerning audience spellbound for its whole length. I also knew that she had been rehearsing her piece for the film at home. I asked Lakshmi how long this particular version of the *varnam* would run. She said, "Mother





Picture by Sandip Ray

At Chidambaram

has whittled it down to twelve minutes. She says she can't make it any shorter". I was anxious that the dance should go into a single reel, as otherwise it would involve a changeover in the projection, causing an inevitable jerk in the music. I should have been happier had the dance been a trifle shorter. At one point I even thought of pointing out to Bala that the exigencies of the 78 rpm gramophone record had at one time obliged even our most eminent classical musicians to perform 3-minute *khayals*, complete with *alap*, *vilambit* and *drut*. But in the end I decided to let Bala have her way, only pointing out that since the film in the camera had to be replenished every five minutes, she would have to do her dance in three parts. As it turned out, Bala had already decided to do it piecemeal, and had split it up into a dozen or so units. This was not out of consideration for the camera, but to ensure perfection in her performance. This striving for perfection, as I learned later, was instilled in her early in her career by her mother. "Remember", she has said, "there will always be at least one crazy person in the audience who will know all the time exactly what you are doing".

In filming the *varnam*, I had the extraordinary experience of turning into a bemused spectator, wholly at the mercy of the performer, but happy in the thought that what the camera was recording was Bala at her resplendent best. □ □

# Censorship: Interpretation Is All

B. K. Karanjia

Censorship is news. All democratic countries pay lip service to freedom of expression, almost all of them have censorship in one form or another, over one medium or another. The spoken word, a written article, sketch, short story or novel, a painting, a caricature or a piece of sculpture, a dramatic performance, a gramophone record, a radio or TV broadcast or a tape played to audiences, all come under the purview of censorship. But since films are believed to be the most pervasive and the most insidious of the media (dual appeal to eye and ear, mixed nature of the captive audience, darkened auditorium, immediate impact, etc.), the effects of censorship on films are the most conspicuous. Man is a social animal who resorts to a variety of media to communicate. A highly moral animal, he has a weakness, which he believes to be his strength, to set limits on what should or should not be communicated.

But it was not always so. In his provocative, richly documented study of pornography and censorship,\* Justice G. D. Khosla (who, incidentally, was also Chairman of the Enquiry Committee on Film Censorship appointed by the Government of India in 1968) shows how the poets who composed the hymns of the Vedas had no hesitation in speaking plainly and unashamedly of the organs of sex and their functions, or of the physical pleasure induced by the act of coitus. The completely matter-of-fact, innocent manner in which the needs and desires of the flesh are narrated, as, for instance, in the *Mahabharata*, bears testimony to "a guiltless uninhibited attitude towards sex". In fact, our forefathers living in the Vedic and Puranic times did not believe in the efficacy of censorship as a means of promoting moral values or raising standards of purity, chastity and loyalty to one's spouse. *Kama Sutra*, considered in Europe today as a book unsuitable for young people, was required reading (with the approval of their parents) for young girls before marriage.

Justice Khosla contrasts this with the Christian attitude towards sex. The concept of original sin led to the wholesale suppression of a natural and powerful instinct with dire consequences to moral and cultural values and a distortion of nature's desire for keeping alive the species. Justice Khosla traces the prevalence of pornography directly to this suppression. Christian moralists thought nothing of deleting highly salacious passages from the original *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. When the censorship of anything relating to the natural and compelling urge of sex becomes too repressive and undesirable, the urge according to him is driven down under, and unable to sustain the weight of suppression explodes into what decent people

\*PORNOGRAPHY AND CENSORSHIP IN INDIA by G. D. Khosla, India Book Company, New Delhi, 1976, Rs. 40.00 (In English).

call dirt and indecency. The instances Justice Khosla gives of the libidinous from Chaucer and Rabelais to Havelock Ellis and Henry Miller constitute the most interesting, not only speaking pornographically, parts of his book.

As we said earlier, censorship is almost universal. So is the resistance to it. "The conflict therefore resolves itself," writes Justice Khosla, "into an argument between the urge to change, to experiment, to improve, on the one hand, and on the other, the need for preserving the morals and the stability of society". Censorship takes many forms and may be imposed in several ways—by an individual authority (parent, teacher, employer), by an institution (school, college, religious authority), by public opinion, by administrators through an act of the legislature or an executive order. Few would question the wisdom or propriety of parental or tutelary censorship. Institutional censorship is accepted in theory but seldom in practice, while public opinion on questions of morality is inclined to be fitful and capricious. Censorship by the State may give rise to a measure of resentment, but in today's complex society in which the State has perforce to assume several additional responsibilities some form of censorship is necessary. This has been found to be particularly so in the case of films.

Yet nothing illustrates more dramatically the failure of censorship policy in the past, at least in our country, in spite of its extraordinary rigidity, as the censorship of films, particularly in the sphere of sex and violence. Justice Khosla's own Committee on Film Censorship has given umpteen instances in films passed by the Censors of—I quote from the Report—"dances obviously libidinous and lesbian in character", "with very little relevance to the story", dances, "which can only be described as the performance of a unilateral act of coitus", "unrealistic and crude display of erotic capers", and of "the tendency of introducing vulgar incidents and bawdy jokes dressed up as comic fare". It is not only that our producers are dominated by anatomical rather than aesthetic considerations. They have also exploited violence for the sake of violence, violence as a "spectator sport", the sort of violence that is patently dehumanising and manifestly exploitative in nature. We have the new-fangled institution of "fight composers". These worthies not only indulge in all the tricks and tackles of the wrestling text-books but they have been pressing into service a wide assortment of unorthodox weapons: metal rods and chains, studded belts, broken bottles, burning logs of wood, live electric conductors and so on endlessly.

It is obvious therefore that a perverted form of sex and violence has inundated our cinema. The recent Government ban seeks to set this right. But a blanket ban on sex and violence is not the answer. The Khosla Report very rightly points out: "If in telling the story, it is logical, relevant or necessary, to depict a passionate kiss or a nude woman figure, there should be no question of excluding the shot provided the theme is handled with delicacy and feeling, aiming at aesthetic expression, and avoiding all suggestion of prurience or lasciviousness." Similarly with violence. Violence as a deep-rooted problem of the adult world will always remain a valid subject of discussion and analysis. You can't have social transformation unless you discuss frankly and responsibly what exactly the "transformation" involves.

What then is the answer? A look at censorship in the cinematically advanced countries may help us to find one. All these countries have one common feature—they all pay lip service to freedom of expression, and all exercise censorship on films. Starting from the days when films were as disreputable as the music hall and the penny dreadful, official attitudes to it have never caught up with the development of the cinema into a medium for the expression of artistic truths. In France the right of freedom of expression is subject to the legislative power of the State. In Britain there is no such thing as an absolute or fundamental right of freedom of expression, though the right is so much a part of the British way of life that Parliament would not dream of abrogating it. In America this right is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. In fact in 1952 the Supreme Court held that any kind of censorship is an unconstitutional clog on freedom of speech. But then in 1961 a ruling was given that censorship as such is not unconstitutional as long as a correct and legal procedure is laid down in the Act imposing censorship. The position in India appears to be, constitutionally, sounder. Article 19 of our Constitution declares that all citizens have the right to freedom of speech and expression. An amendment to the constitution passed in 1951 qualifies this freedom by imposing "reasonable restrictions" in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

Film censorship in India dates back to 1918 when the Indian Cinematograph Act was passed. In 1920 Boards of Film Censors were set up in the four places at which films were imported into the country — Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon (Burma was at that time a part of India and there was scarcely any indigenous industry of film making). Inspectors of films were appointed and the Bombay Board took the initiative in issuing to them a list of 43 rules, suggestions, directions or don'ts, call them what you will. These 43 don'ts were almost identical with those issued by the British Film Censors. The four Boards later gave way to a Central Board of Film Censors, but these 43 don'ts have continued to pattern and shape the history of film censorship in this country. This along with the history of film censorship in other countries illumines the whole controversial problem of pornography and censorship.

Two broad trends emerge from the study of film censorship, which could be adapted to censorship of other media as well. One is that a voluntary form of censorship is more in consonance with freedom of speech. The other is to lay down general principles, as briefly worded as possible, with a view to promote greater flexibility, give wider discretion to censors and make provision for changing standards of morality. The original 43 points of the British Code of Censorship have now whittled down to a few general rules. The briefly declared objectives of the American Production Code Administration could well serve as a model to censors all over the world: (1) to encourage artistic expression by expanding creative freedom; and (2) to ensure that the freedom which encourages the artist remains responsible and sensitive to the standards of the larger society. In sad contrast the hoary 43 points with their detailed don'ts continue to dog our approaches to censorship.

Justice Khosla in the final chapter of his study raises certain questions that must agitate the minds of all those who think seriously on the subject of pornography and censorship, and, on the whole, he gives eminently sensible answers. Sex is a proper subject for treatment in literature and the visual and performing arts. These arts, which deal with human lives, human emotions and aspirations, and the study of man in all its aspects and ramifications, cannot possibly omit references to sex, "the most important and the most powerful urge of animal life". At the same time he argues that some types of pornography are indistinguishable from obscenity and indecency and may therefore well be brought within the purview of the law enacted in the interest of decency and morality. He particularly stresses that the effects of pornography on young and immature minds, as distinct from adults, is far from wholesome. "Even mild forms of pornography have a tendency to make young people sexually precocious and arouse a desire for which they are neither mentally nor physically ready". On the question as to whether pornography in art and literature should be subject to legislation or left to public taste, he is quite clear. Any form of indecency that is not only offensive to good taste but is unwholesome without possessing any saving virtue on artistic or other grounds should be subject to restrictive legislation. Most of us would agree with Justice Khosla's enunciation of these general principles. It would be further agreed that censors should follow broad guidelines rather than seek to enforce specific prohibitions and that good taste should be the final arbiter. Finally there would also be general agreement with Justice Khosla's last suggestion that censorship is best exercised "by a court of law assisted by a jury of five, seven or nine persons of proved intelligence and integrity, who enjoy the confidence of the literary and intellectual sections of the society and who can be expected to give a sound verdict". But it is when he comes down from general principles to the specifics of censorship that Justice Khosla inevitably flounders.

What censorship boils down to is proper interpretation, and since interpretation varies widely, no system of censorship is or can be perfect. We need not go into such conflicting and rather ludicrous interpretations we come across in our daily lives. Justice Khosla himself provides a vivid illustration. Discussing the film *A Clockwork Orange*, he comes down heavily on it as "a vicious piece of the most insidious and the most injurious type of pornography". He goes on to say: "The film will disgust the normal healthy individual, and act on the others as an incitement to commit offences involving sex and violence". He cannot resist having a dig at "pseudo aesthetes and senseless advocates of liberty-at-all-cost (even at the cost of self-destruction) who have lauded and will continue to laud Stanley Kubrick's insane entertainment". Justice Khosla concludes: "I have no doubt that a jury of nine honest and intelligent persons will arrive at the verdict that the film crudely deals with the physical aspects of sex, cruelty and violence in juxtaposition and was prepared with the intention of pandering to the baser elements of human nature for personal gain".

Justice Khosla would perhaps not be surprised to learn that outstanding film critics of undoubted integrity as well as students of cinema all over the world have acclaimed *A Clockwork Orange* as a great work of art:

they have stated that far from advocating violence a viewing of the entire film arouses a revulsion, an abhorrence against violence. *A Clockwork Orange* could perhaps best be described as a violently anti-violence film. Nothing in Stanley Kubrick's long and illustrious career suggests that he would stoop "to pander to the baser elements of human nature for personal gain". My point in dealing with this instance at length is to show how, confronted with a controversial work of art, honest and intelligent men can arrive at contrary verdicts. The same point can be made about the *Tropic of Cancer* and *Coffee, Tea Or Me* which Justice Khosla rather dogmatically and unreasonably relegates to "low-brow, sexy, pornographic literature".

This is not an argument against censorship, but a plea that its in-built limitations should be borne in mind. The censor's job is not only a thankless but a thorny one: Interpretation is all. There is always the possibility of a difficult, demanding or just a different work of art being subject to a wrong censorial interpretation, and one must always shudder at the prospect.

### UNESCO's First Thirty Years

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of UNESCO. Born at the end of the Second World War on 4 November 1946, UNESCO has seen its membership grow from 24 countries in 1946 to 136 today. Under the guidance of its first Director-General, Julian Huxley, UNESCO started its work in the Hotel Majestic, which had been the Nazi's General Headquarters during the Second World War. The preamble to UNESCO's constitution, by the American poet, Archibald MacLeish, proclaimed that UNESCO was primarily dedicated to peace through education, science and culture. In education, promoting literacy meant that the large mass of underprivileged people had to be educated in hygiene, in improved methods of agriculture and better care of environment.

Among the varied activities in the field of culture was a six volume history of the cultural and scientific development of mankind, catalogues of the best colour reproductions of paintings, collections of art books and colour slides, musical anthologies, creation of an international architecture prize etc. The projects undertaken by UNESCO include the review *Museum* and the *Index Translationum*, the international catalogue of translations. The UNESCO programme of translations of literary works now covers more than 500 translations from some 60 countries.

In 1957, UNESCO started a large-scale operation to promote international understanding, based upon the mutual appreciation of the cultural values of East and West. The review *Cultures* began informing the public about cultural life on an international level.

UNESCO's programmes included the campaign to save the monuments of Nubia, which made possible the transfer of the twin temples of Abu Simbel. Other projects to restore and safeguard the world's cultural heritage are concerned with Venice, Borobudur (Indonesia), Mohenjo Daro (Pakistan), the Valley of Kathmandu and Carthage. UNESCO is also carrying out projects for the restoration of monuments in Latin America. In 1975, UNESCO's Convention for the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage came into force and it also launched a new inter-disciplinary programme, "Man and His Environment—the Human Habitat", with the aim of improving the quality of the natural and cultural environment.

The most significant movement in recent years has been the growing awareness of the cultural—as distinct from the purely economic—dimension of development. A chain of conferences on the institutional, administrative, and financial aspects of cultural policies was held to spotlight the right to culture and governments' responsibilities to provide it. A very recent

event was the setting up of a voluntary International Fund for the Promotion of Culture. To achieve advance "through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world", UNESCO conducts conferences, seminars, workshops and training courses to exchange experiences and attempt common solutions. UNESCO has also sponsored an agreement that provides for removal of tariff and trade barriers for a wide range of educational, scientific and cultural materials.

In 1959, 17 Asian Member States made a number of joint recommendations on education, one of which called for free education for all children in Asia by 1980. UNESCO also prepared an Asian model of educational development. UNESCO continues to assist its Asian Member States to train their own specialists in radio, press, television and film. It has collaborated in the establishment of an Asian Institute for Broadcasting Development at Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia where plans for the first five years call for the training of some 20,000 persons in broadcasting techniques.

UNESCO is directly interested in the use of space communication for education, science and culture. In India, it helped train programme producers for the experimental project SITE, whereby educational TV programmes are beamed via a satellite directly to community receivers in some 2400 villages in six Indian states.

The task laid upon UNESCO of peace and security can never be fully realized through the means assigned to it—education, science and culture. It must envisage some form of world political unity—but that is a remote ideal. Even so, UNESCO can do a great deal towards promoting it by helping the peoples of the world to a realization of the common humanity and common tasks which they share.

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### 200th Anniversary of the Bolshoi Theatre

This year, 1976, is the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Bolshoi Theatre, one of the great theatres of the world.

The word Russian is associated with Ballet in the minds of most people, though the origins of Ballet as an art form can be traced to France. Though it is some three hundred years old, it is in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century that Classical Ballet reached its great heights. The Bolshoi at Moscow and the Kirov at Leningrad have played very significant roles in its growth and development.

Over two hundred years ago, in 1773, the Trusteeship Council of the Moscow Orphanage decided to start classes in dancing for its inmates.



From Swan Lake

Filippo Bercari, a former dancer of the St. Petersburg Court Theatre, offered his services as a teacher. The Council hesitated. Could he turn little orphans into dancers? Bercari made a deal. "Give me three years", he said. "I shall draw no salary until I prove to you that I can make dancers of these orphans". In three years he had created about sixty good dancers, some of them good enough to be soloists. By 1776 these dancers could stage ballets regularly, and the Bolshoi was born. Thus an orphanage was the cradle of ballet training in Moscow. Today the Bolshoi School is a thriving, disciplined, organised institute which attracts young talent from all over the Soviet Union and from abroad.

The fame of the Bolshoi as the home of great opera and ballet spread to the world during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This was the era of Petipa, Alexander Gorsky, Yekaterina Geltser, Tchaikowski, Bakst. *Swan Lake* was first staged in 1877. Other great ballets of the era were such classics as *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*.

With the Revolution we notice a slow shift in Russian Ballet towards a greater realism, a greater humanity. *The Red Poppy* created on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Revolution is a historic landmark. It can be described as the first classical ballet with a modern theme. Other great





achievements of this period are *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, *The Stone Flower*, *The Bronze Horseman*, culminating in Kachaturian's *Spartacus*. This is ballet with a social purpose — the integration of consummate artistry with a high degree of human involvement.

The most recent phase of Soviet Ballet shows a true marriage of artistic forms at the highest level. Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, with choreography by Lavrovsky and featuring the incomparable Galina Ulanova, is an excellent example of this. The most recent of such works is Schedrine's *Anna Karenina* based on Tolstoy's great novel, with Maya Plisetskaya creating the leading role. These represent not just a transfer of a story from one idiom to another, but the recreation in a new idiom of the inner meaning of a play or a novel.

In such new works, Soviet Ballet achieves areas of excellence with no other considerations except quality and artistic integrity. They have set standards which lesser companies should try to emulate without hoping to equal.

### *Bayreuth Festival Hall Celebrates its 100th Anniversary*

1976 is the hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of the Bayreuth Festival Hall. Its design was based on Richard Wagner's ideas.

*Bayreuth Festival Hall*



Acoustics were the supreme consideration. The orchestra and the conductor were so located that they were not visible to the audience and did not detract attention from the production on the stage. The prompter's box was dispensed with. The newly designed Hall was opened on August 13, 1876 with *The Ring of the Nibelung*. Hans Richter, the most celebrated Wagnerian conductor of the day, was the conductor.

Richard Wagner died in 1883 but the Festival idea survives and his family, friends, and interpreters have all helped to preserve his heritage. In 1973, the Richard Wagner Foundation was set up to ensure the maintenance of the Festival Hall, the cultivation of the Wagner heritage, and the promotion of Wagner research. Its activities have enhanced Bayreuth's reputation as a memorial to Richard Wagner.

### *Badal Sircar's Theatre Workshop in Bombay*

Badal Sircar, the well-known dramatist, conducted a Theatre Workshop in Bombay under the auspices of the National Centre for the Performing Arts. Thirty-two participants from fifteen amateur groups spent an eventful day with him, imbibing the principles and techniques of the 'physical theatre' style that he and his group (*Setabdi*) have adopted.

During the well-attended discussion session in the evening, Shri Badal Sircar outlined his journey in theatre and the actual experiences which had prompted him to evolve the form of writing and performance of his more recent works (*Spartacus*, *Michil*, and *Bhoma*). His views on the mode of presenting living realities on the stage through the most effective use of the potential of the human body and through dispensing with the usual paraphernalia of stage properties turned out to be extremely stimulating. The concrete examples he cited of achieving spectator-actor, actor-actor, and spectator-spectator contact and his account of the group's efforts to reach out to ordinary people in cities and villages were an eye-opener to many theatre activists.

## Book Reviews

**GWALIOR KE TOMAR** by Hariharnivas Dwivedi, Vidyamandir Prakashan, Gwalior, 1976, Rs. 75.00 (*In Hindi*).

This is the second volume of the author's comprehensive work on the History of the Tomars, the first on the Tomars of Delhi having been published in 1973 (reviewed in the Quarterly Journal of the National Centre for the Performing Arts Vol. IV No. 1, March 1975, pp. 53-54). Broadly speaking, this book is divided into five parts. The first part, comprising of twelve chapters and two appendices, graphically deals with the political history of the Tomars. One happy feature of the work is that the author has utilised almost all the important sources including, of course, the epigraphs and the data available in Hindi and Sanskrit. He does not seem to have faith, however, in the Persian chronicles which he generally refutes or rejects. On the other hand, he has largely relied on the bardic series of *Gwalior-Nama-s*, at least six of which are available. The earliest known as *Gopachala-Akhyan* by Khadgarai was compiled during Shah Jehan's reign and its Datia copy entitled *Gwalior-Nama* is dated in V.S. 1853/1796 A.D. Other *Gwalior-Nama-s* by Fazl Ali, Badilidas, Hiranman Munshi and others are of a later date and have, in greater or lesser degree, drawn from Khadgarai. In spirit as well as in content, each one is an eulogical narrative and ought to be approached only with extreme caution and objectivity.

The second part deals with the Tomars of Malwa, the third with the close of their period, the fourth with the Tomar nobles under the Mughals and the fifth with cultural trends. The last part, which consists of five chapters and five appendices and covers nearly 160 pages, is the most important. The author throws a flood of light on important aspects of Indian culture (such as music, painting, sculpture and architecture) of the fifteenth century. He provides a fund of valuable and basic data and his contribution to the subject is indeed monumental.

It must, however, be pointed out that some of his conclusions are biased and sometimes based on inadequate proof. His observation (pp. 150, 308-14) that the famous Tansen adorned the court of Raja Mansingh Tomar (A.D. 1486-1516) is not correct. If this account is accepted, Tansen should have been at least 30 in 1510 and 83 when he was introduced to Akbar in 1563 which is not possible. There is no contemporary evidence to support the author's contention. His view is completely refuted by the authenticated portraits of Tansen (*Lalit Kala* Nos. 1-2, pp. 11-21 and No 14, p. 57) That Tansen was a disciple of Baiju, too, is an over-statement. In fact, the matter has been stretched too far in order to eulogize the Tomars.

The *Chaurasi Khambha* building situated in the neighbourhood of *Man Mandir* was never a temple. One needs to be intimately acquainted with temple architecture to make such a pronouncement. Its structure affirms, beyond doubt, that it was an Assembly Hall which Raja Mansingh might have built. The portal (*ivan*) to its north was added later during Babur's reign as the Nagari inscription carved on the western wall shows. There is yet another Arabic-Persian epigraph on the eastern wall of its exterior, (near the original staired entrance) which the author has missed. This is dated in A.H. 938/1531 and the text shows that the place was used for dispensation of justice during the reign of Humayun. That it was originally a temple built during the reign of Durgendrasingh is pure conjecture.

It is a pity that such a marvel as the *Man Mandir* has been treated very scantily by the author. The disposal of its plan in several storeys through a network of courts, rooms, halls, inter-connecting corridors and staircases is unique. Ventilation has been dexterously provided for. The traces on the terrace amply show that every suite had an independent supply of water. This ensured perfectly comfortable living conditions in the fifteenth century. At least ten novel methods of spanning the space through a skilful and yet beautiful fusion of arcuate and trabeate systems have been adopted here in stone. The lion and elephant brackets, the serpentine struts, the *torana-s*, the *shirsha-s* of the pillars, the *vitana-s* and *manchika-s*—belong to an extremely graceful and vigorous artistic style that had come into being under the Raja. All this called for vindication.

Narayandasa's description from his *Chhitai-Charita* is no doubt an important reference. But the author has failed to trace the sources of inspiration of the art of the *Man Mandir*—which can only be studied correctly with reference to its historical background. The author's account tends to show that everything appeared miraculously, all of a sudden, under the Tomars at Gwalior. This part of his history cannot be written adequately without a study of the renaissance of art which set in about the middle of the fifteenth century with Rana Kumbha of Mewar. It was he who, in fact, laid down a great tradition of fine arts and he was also, in a sense, the real preceptor of Raja Mansingh Tomar. The *Jhilmili* of Dwivedi, the strut and the *torana*-motif are, for example, Gujarati in origin. Many things found their way to Gwalior from Mewar where the Gujarati *salet-s* were already at work and architectural canons of such secular texts as the *Raja-Vallabha* of Sutradhar Mandana had been already put into practice.

The author's description of the monuments of the Ladheri locality is chronologically as incorrect as it is stylistically defective. Except the *Ladheri* gateway (which the author has dismissed in a word and not examined at length), no other building of the area belongs to the fifteenth or the sixteenth century. Most of them were built during the seventeenth century under the governors, from Jehangir to Aurangzeb. These structures do not stand comparison with Fatehpur Sikri, much less do they excel it. The author's attempt to emphasize this similarity reads like an effort to elevate the Tomar period.

Owing to his incorrect reading of the Arabic and Persian epigraph on the frieze of the south entrance of the *Gujari Mahal* (his Plate 27), Pt Dwivedi has missed the valuable idea contained in it. Correctly it reads:- *First Line* (Arabic): "Bismillah-ir-Rehman-ir-Rahim Al-Mulko-Lillah Malik-ul-Mulq Zul Jalal". (The country belongs to God who is the Supreme Lord of the Universe and who sustains it.) The verse itself is not Quranic; it is an adaptation of the Quranic dictum Sura LXVII, Verse 1 which reads: "Blessed be He (God) in whose hand is dominion and He over all things hath power". *Second Line* (Persian): "Een dua-e Madad-een ki Raja Mansingh bin Raja Kalyan-mal". (This palace built by the blessings of Raja Mansingh son of Raja Kalyanmal.) The incident of its depiction on the palace gateway and its inscription in such a typically Muslim ornamental scheme as glazed-tiling may help us, in a large measure, to settle the vital question of Raja Mansingh's sovereignty. It is noteworthy that all his inscriptions which mention him as *Maharajadhiraja* are limited to the Fort and we do not come across any epigraph or land-grant or consecration-tablet of the Raja outside it. That he was ever coronated and possessed the paraphernalia of sovereignty, as prescribed by the *Shashtra*-s, is not on record. The Persian chronicles have altogether a different version to give. Most significant in this respect is the undeniable fact that the Lodi coinage called 'Bahlioli' was in currency at Gwalior itself and we have not yet been able to find a single coin of Raja Mansingh. This extremely important aspect of Tomar polity has been entirely missed by the historian of the Tomars and the vacuum yet remains to be filled.

This epigraph is not Kalma as the author refers to it, and consistently so, on pp. 433-436. In fact, it does not seem to have been actually read by him before the book was printed and it is only later that a plate (No. 27) bearing its reading is inserted. Likewise, some inscriptions of the Tomars came to his notice through Mr. Arthur Hughes I.C.S., only at the later stages of printing. Even so, some have been missed. Three important inscriptions of the Dhondha-Paur, two of the so-called Teli-ka-Mandir and two of the larger Sas-Bahu Temple, could have been of great help to him.

Most of the conclusions related to the Tomars, deduced in the otherwise excellent chapter, *Samudra Manthan aur Nilkantha*, are subjective. The whole exposition of Raja Mansingh's policy of religious toleration, based as it is on the erroneous belief that the *Gujari Mahal* epigraph is Kalma, is historically incorrect. Kalyanmal's relationship with Lad Khan has also been misinterpreted. The opening verses of the work *Ananga-Ranga* by the poet Kalyanmalla give an altogether different version:

समुद्रं ध्यात कीर्तिरहमवतुषतिः कामसिध्दन्तिविद्वान् ।  
 जोयाह्लाताइवेक विहितपति मुक्तेर्पुष्टपादारकिन्वः ॥  
 अस्मैव केतुक निमित्तमनु-रुद्धं प्रवृ वितामिजन वत्सवमातनीमि ।  
 श्रीमन्महाकवीरतोष क्ताविद्वन् कयापयत्त इति भूप मुनिर्यशास्वी ॥

(Son of famous King Ahmed, King Lad Deva who was proficient in Kama-shastra, whom the princes adored, then ruled. The reputed royal poet Kalyanmalla, who was expert in all the arts, composed this work *Ananga-Ranga* during his reign, for his pleasure and for the benefit of the amorous people). In view of this, the author's theory of a Lad Khan and Yavanpur appears to be pure fiction. Here, too, he has tried to eulogize the Tomars and this is the main defect of this work.

There is no Bibliography and no Index. Half-tone plates would have been better. The printing, as a whole, is satisfactory and the book is readable. In view of the medium quality of production, the price seems a bit steep. But the book is indispensable to all those who wish to pursue further a study of any aspect of the history of the Tomars or the culture of fifteenth century India.

—R. NATH

STAGE MAKEUP by Richard Corson, Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey, 1975, \$ 16. 95 (In English).

This book deals with the latest techniques and materials of make-up for the stage and, to some extent, for films and T.V. too. Intended primarily for the amateur, even the professional will find this book invaluable in practical advice, new ideas and information on products.

Clear, step-by-step explanations detail the basic straight and corrective make-up for men and women. Extensive sections cover make-up for character, age, racial and national types, period and historical characters, and popular figures of legend and fantasy. All the work is shown against a background of lighting and wardrobe, which must needs be considered when planning make-up.

Especially valuable is the detailed treatment, with photographs, of the making of prosthetics, such as masks, or false noses and ear pieces.

Charts are appended, giving suggested materials for make-up, and an appendix provides a complete list of make-up materials available.

Pioneering, comprehensive and authoritative, this manual should be kept handy on the reference shelf, not only by every make-up artist but also by every individual sincerely interested in and seriously connected with the theatre.

—SAROSH B. MODY

SANGEETACHE MANAS SHASTRA, Music Bulletin (Nos. 28-34 March-April 1973 to March-April 1974), University Music Centre, University of Bombay, Bombay, 1976, Rs. 2.00 (*In Marathi*).

This publication includes five lectures on *Psychology for Musicians* delivered by Prof. K. M. Phadke at the University Music Centre. The first lecture dealt with the nature of psychology and its relevance to musical activity. The second lecture discussed sensation and perception in general, with music as a kind of communication involving 'a musical code'. The third lecture concentrated on attitudes, as a whole, with special reference to the *gharana* system. The fourth lecture concerned itself with the concept of motivation, and its manifestations, both from the point of view of the musician and the listener. The fifth lecture was devoted to stage fright as a psychological phenomenon determining musical performances. The lectures were followed by a discussion and the non-technical elaboration of pertinent concepts from Psychology helped students to relate them to aspects of musical performance, education and thinking.

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ICA-INFORMATION. Quarterly liaison and information bulletin of the African Cultural Institute (ACI). Published by the African Cultural Institute, Dakar, Senegal, No. 3—April-May-June 1976 (*In English and French*).

This quarterly liaison and information bulletin of the African Cultural Institute (ACI) seeks to reinforce the Institute's aim to make the political liberation of the whole of Africa effective and total through supporting it by cultural cooperation. The Executive Council of the ACI which met at Dakar in May 1976 outlined a programme for the setting up of a Regional Centre for Cultural Action and a Research and Documentation Regional Centre for Cultural Development. To stimulate creative work in literary, artistic and scientific fields it instituted competitions, planned exhibitions of African arts, and laid emphasis on "the preservation of the environment, whether it is the architectural heritage, the monuments, sites, landscapes, historic towns or districts or the natural environment".

The publication includes biographical data on prize-winners, reports of various festivals, seminars and of the work carried out in respect of important research institutions.

TRADITIONS OF INDIAN FOLK DANCE by Kapila Vatsyayan, Indian Book Company, New Delhi, 1976, Rs. 60.00 (*In English*).

The activities of the human being in a continuous pattern, through time, become its culture. Spontaneous gestures and movements in certain structural designs soon become a form of dance. In India, the inner rhythm of the spirit of man and its outer symbolism in the arts have through the centuries been of great significance in the development of art forms.

Creativity whether in dance, music or painting was thought of as a gift of the Gods. The expression of it was man's ability to link himself with this great power that pervaded the universe. All dance became prayer, both supplication and thankfulness, two aspects of the human being and his relation of God, whether through the abundant richness of Nature or through the stark simplicity of his own existence. The dance of the people was woven into the fabric of everyday living but it kept reinforcing the sense of total harmony.

The *drishtam*, that which is seen and the *adrishtam*, that which is not seen, in dance communication brought about a wholeness that spoke of the joy and the tribulations of daily life.

Form became a need rather than a selected design. Later the classical and folk separated into distinct techniques, the *margi* and *desi*. As a symbol the circle has always been synonymous with a feeling of fullness, harmony, communication and interdependence. There is the centre of our being, the central vision, the centre of the universe. In many of the dances the centre is a lamp, the flame of illumination around which life revolves. Krishna, symbolically the light of spiritual power, is the centre and 'shines like the full moon surrounded by the stars' in many of the group dances. Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan tells us of variations of design in the traditional folk dance.

"Intricate geometrical patterns are drawn: some are used to bring a magical power on the earth. . . ." The designs are "the mandala, the swastika, the square, the rectangle, the inverted pairs of triangles, the inter-twined serpent", all suggesting 'the deepest spiritual beliefs of the people'. She has ably codified the categories of dance forms including some of what may be called classical today, like the Lai — Haroba of Manipur. As she herself says, "we realise the inadequacy of following simple models of classification of Indian artistic traditions into folk and classical, high and low, Sanskritised and vernacular, 'great' and 'little' . . ."

The book is a description of dance traditions as they exist today in the backdrop of the Indian scene. The study pin-points the names, the structural form, the historical and geographical environment of these traditions and is an excellent and valuable scholastic work.

Yet the involvement, the emotional experience, the interaction of man and mood, which is the essence of folk art, is missing. Dance was and

always has been a basic need of the human being. Movement and life possess a oneness in folk dancing which reflects both tradition and dynamic change, the social processes emerging as dance expression. This aspect is reflected in the songs of the folk and we would wish that a few more could have been added in the book to give it the colour and vividness of folk imagination and longing.

Watching the dance movements of a variety of groups, from rich folklore areas like Kutch, one is aware of the socio-religious content of the development of the dance as set within the framework of history and custom. The Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Harijan dance in body movement that is literally a psychological study of their way of life, their values and their sufferings. The direct experience is hard to convey except perhaps through photographs and films. It is in an atmosphere of creativity, of momentary revelation that real folk dance and music exist, in spite of the basic norms.

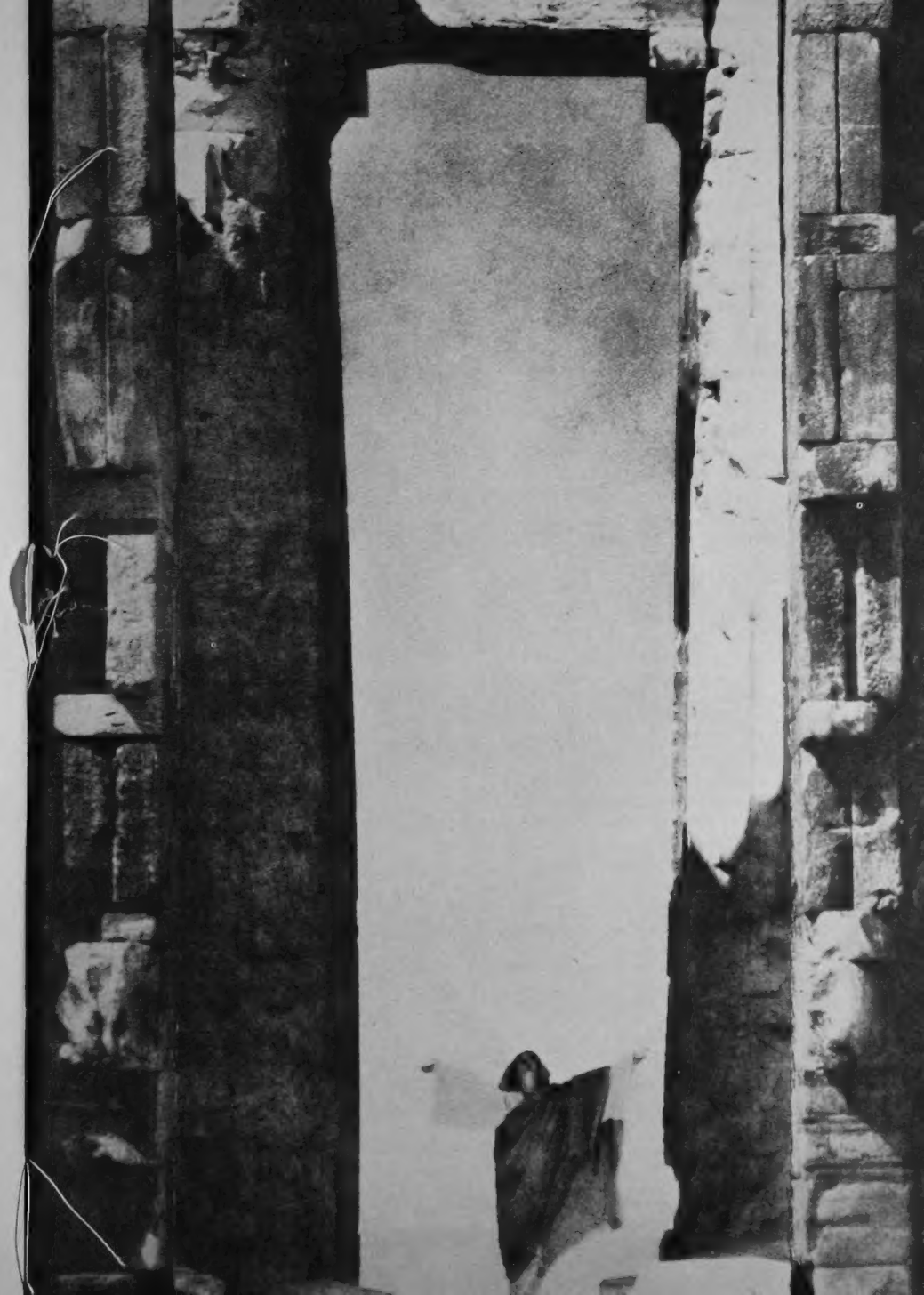
Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan traces the origin of each dance form with its ritualistic and devotional background. This is a tremendous task and she has done it with knowledge and dedication. However a few misinterpretations have crept in. The Garba for instance does not revolve around hunting nor is it an agricultural ritual. It is a dance performed during Navaratri and with slight variations on Sharad Purnima, Vasant Panchami and other festival days. It is a fertility dance and the 'garbhadeep' symbolises embryonic life. The worship is to Shakti as the Mother Goddess Amba Mata, and the cult must have existed even before the Aryan invasion. In order to conceive a child women danced the Garba at the shrine of Shri Krishna at Dwaraka as a religious ritual.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan has covered the vast panorama of our folk traditions. Her scholarship is remarkable and this admirable book helps the reader to understand better the many facets of our heritage.

— MRINALINI V. SARABHAI

MEE — ISADORA (*My Life* by Isadora Duncan). Translated by Rohini Bhate, Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal, Bombay, 1975, Rs. 39.00 (*In Marathi*).

Towards the beginning of this century Isadora Duncan (1878-1927) liberated dance from the clutches of ballet shoes and corsets and danced barefoot all over Europe and America. She overwhelmed the artists and art-lovers of her time with the spontaneity and grace of her dance. Isadora Duncan is an important landmark in the history of dance. Her memoirs, *My Life*, are as free, frank and spontaneous as was her dance. Rohini Bhate manages to convey the easy flow of the original in her Marathi translation of *My Life*.





Isadora Duncan's autobiography offers the readers a rare insight into the mind of an exceptional being. Her utmost sincerity, her passionate love of dance, and her total lack of inhibition cannot but touch the reader's heart.

Isadora Duncan advocated complete freedom and simplicity in dance as well as in life. She rediscovered the dignity of the human walk, the spring, the jump and the expressive use of arms and hands. She believed that the movements of a lovely and healthy body, motivated by a free and innocent mind, transform themselves into beautiful dance. She brought the foot once more in contact with the earth and if she bared the limbs, it was more to reveal feeling rather than the lines of the body. She cleared away painted scenery, ornate costumes, preferring instead harmonious architectural forms, and imaginative use of curtains and lights.

Isadora Duncan's inspiration came from various sources — from the arts of music, poetry, sculpture, painting, from Greek mythology and tragedy and above all from Nature. She placed dancing on par with religion, returning to the ancient concept of dance as a form of worship. She did not discover a new type of dance, nor did she revive a traditional one. Her idiom was her own personal way of expression.

The music to which Isadora Duncan danced was always the greatest — that of Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann or Schubert. For her dance was an intensely personal interpretation in visual form of wonderful music. Isadora Duncan's achievement cannot be judged by the compositions she choreographed or the steps she danced, for nothing of it has survived her. Her contribution lies in her way of thinking, and with it she completely transformed the art of dance. She gave it a kind of passion, a new life. Agnes De Mille describes the creative conflagration which Isadora Duncan touched off. "Not since the discovery of ancient statues during the Renaissance had such a re-evaluation of standards been witnessed in the arts anywhere. She preached a return to classic simplicity and pagan joy at the precise moment in history when our civilization was moving forward into a new era, when freedoms of all kinds were being sought . . . all the dancers who came after her are, in a sense, her children".

The Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal and Rohini Bhate have made a noteworthy contribution to Marathi writing by making Isadora Duncan's *My Life* available to Marathi readers. Rohini Bhate, being herself a dedicated dancer and scholar, is equipped to understand the nuances of Isadora Duncan's language and has found exact parallels, in Marathi or Sanskrit, for many of the terms used by her, without in any way violating the sense of the original. The short notes on the many personalities and the characters from Greek and Roman mythology mentioned in the book will prove very useful to the general reader. In the epilogue Rohini Bhate has tried to fathom the secret underlying the magic of Isadora Duncan's personality.

— SUCHETA BHIDE

## Record Reviews

USTAD NAZAKAT ALI KHAN & USTAD SALAMAT ALI KHAN (Vocal). Side One: *Raga Rageshvari*. Side Two: *Raga Gujar-Todi*. HMV EMC-E 1007 (Stereo).

BRIJ BHUSHAN KABRA (Guitar) *Scaling New Horizons with Guitar*. Side One: *Maand; Gat Vilambit and Drut: Tritaal*. Side Two: *Raga Todi; Alap Gat: Tritaal*. Tabla Accompaniment: *Puran Maharaj*. HMV ECSD 2756 (Stereo).

Years ago when Salamat Ali and Nazakat Ali visited India, these Pakistani singers created a musical sensation. That was when their voices were more mellifluous and effortless. In their recent disc of *Rageshvari* and *Todi* they appear assured but rather self-conscious. The impress of Patiala is unmistakable. The tonal leaps, the surprise forays into the higher octaves and the sensuous play with tonal and word-structures are all there. The teaming-up reveals great skill, and a veteran's eye for what is effective.

Of the two pieces *Rageshvari* is more tuneful and less rough. *Todi* — renderings include the almost ancient *bandish*, *Ja Ja Re Pathikwa* — which is here hardly recognizable. The singers, in fact, appear to make an excuse of the *bandish* to launch off into their own musical elaborations. In both the pieces the pair seems to be more at home in the *drut* compositions (the *tarana*-s in *Rageshvari* and *Todi* and *Teental* in *Todi*). The speed, the *sargam*-s, and the *thumri* — oriented use of words all come to the fore. India and Pakistan inherited the same tradition of classical music. Even today the situation remains unchanged.

Kabra's *Todi* reveals him at once as a serious artist and an able instrumentalist. His *alap*-s in *Todi* reflect the authentic conception of *Todi* in its totality. He has a sure, tuneful and eager touch. His rendering is obviously influenced by sarod versions. I for one would be happy to see him carry his experimentation further and rely more on the model of vocal music since the instrument he wields has obviously more affinity with that than with the sarod or the sitar. Perhaps his renderings will then appear more spontaneous and not weighed down by the influence of these instruments. His *Maand* is a shade more independent and interests us with its intelligent introduction of *Des* and other themes. His tonal variations are more relaxed and less deliberate here. Experience confirms that many artists feel their way with more facility in lighter themes than in classical melodies. Kabra proves the rule and with happy consequences.

— ASHOK RANADE

LALGUDI G. JAYARAMAN (Violin Solo) with Umayalpuram Sivaraman (Mridangam). Side One: Charukesi. Side Two: Kanada, Sindhubhairavi. HMV ECSD 3273 (Stereo).

S. BALACHANDER (Veena) Marvellous Melakarta Melodies: Album 12, Final Album. Side One: 42nd Melakarta Raghupriya, 47th Melakarta Suvar-naangi, 50th Melakarta Naamanaaraayani. Side Two: 55th Melakarta Syaamalaangi, 64th Melakarta Vaachaspati, 69th Melakarta Dhaatu-wardhani. HMV ECSD 3250 (Stereo).

The well-known Carnatic violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman plays two *kriti*-s of Thyagaraja and one *tillana* composed by himself. Jayaraman comes from a family of musicians going back to Lalgudi Ramayya, a direct disciple of Thyagaraja. His technical virtuosity, sense of balance and tonal precision are well brought out in this disc. The Charukesi *alapana* is elaborate and a masterly exposition of a not so popular *raga*. The Thyagaraja *kriti*, which follows, is neatly played. The Kanada piece of Thyagaraja is crisp and the im-provision of *swara*-s at the end is quite attractive. The concluding *tillana* in Sindhubhairavi composed by himself and set to Adi *tala* is a fitting finale to this disc, a mini concert. The mridangam accompaniment by Umayalpuram Sivaraman is quite effective throughout.

The second disc is the concluding album of a series of 12 records on Melakarta *raga*-s played by S. Balachander, the talented Vainika from the South. The details of the other discs in this series are found in the sleeve notes of this disc. The *raga* system of Carnatic music is based on the 72 Melakartas (Sampurna *raga*-s). S. Balachander has done a great service to Indian music by demonstrating on the veena all the 72 Melakartas spread over 12 discs, 6 Melakartas for each disc. In the disc under review, he has taken up 6 Pratimadhyama *raga*-s, one each from Chakras 7 to 12. He tries to bring forth the special character of each *raga* by playing a short *alapana* and *tanam* in that *raga*. The expert handling of the three Vivadi Melas (42, 55, 69) is a noteworthy feature of this disc. The whole series of 12 records should be a valuable addition to any good musical collection.

— PADMA RANGACHARI

#### Errata

The final picture in the article *Burmese Music and Dance* (June 1976 issue of the Quarterly Journal, p. 8) is of a Northwest U.S. American Indian dance and not one from Burma. The error is regretted.

— Editor.

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## NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021

### SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Programme	Date	Venue
1. Illustrated talk on Delius by David Stone	3/12/76	N.C.P.A.
2. Bharata Natyam recital by Alarmel Valli	16/12/76	N.C.P.A.
3. Usman Khan (Sitar)	20/12/76	N.C.P.A.
4. Ralph D'Mello (Clarinet)	29/12/76	N.C.P.A.
5. Exhibition of six paintings from the British Council's Collection	3/1/77 to 8/1/77	NCPA Exhibition Gallery
6. A programme of Manipur Folk and Classical dances by the Manipuri Jagoi Marup	14/1/77	Tejpal Auditorium
7. Christian Larde (Flute) Marie-Claire Jamet (Harp) (in collaboration with the Alliance Française de Bombay)	24/2/77 or 25/2/77	Homi Bhabha Auditorium (Programme subject to confirmation)
8. Adrian D'Mello (Violin) Tehmie Gazdar (Pianoforte)	14/3/77	N.C.P.A.